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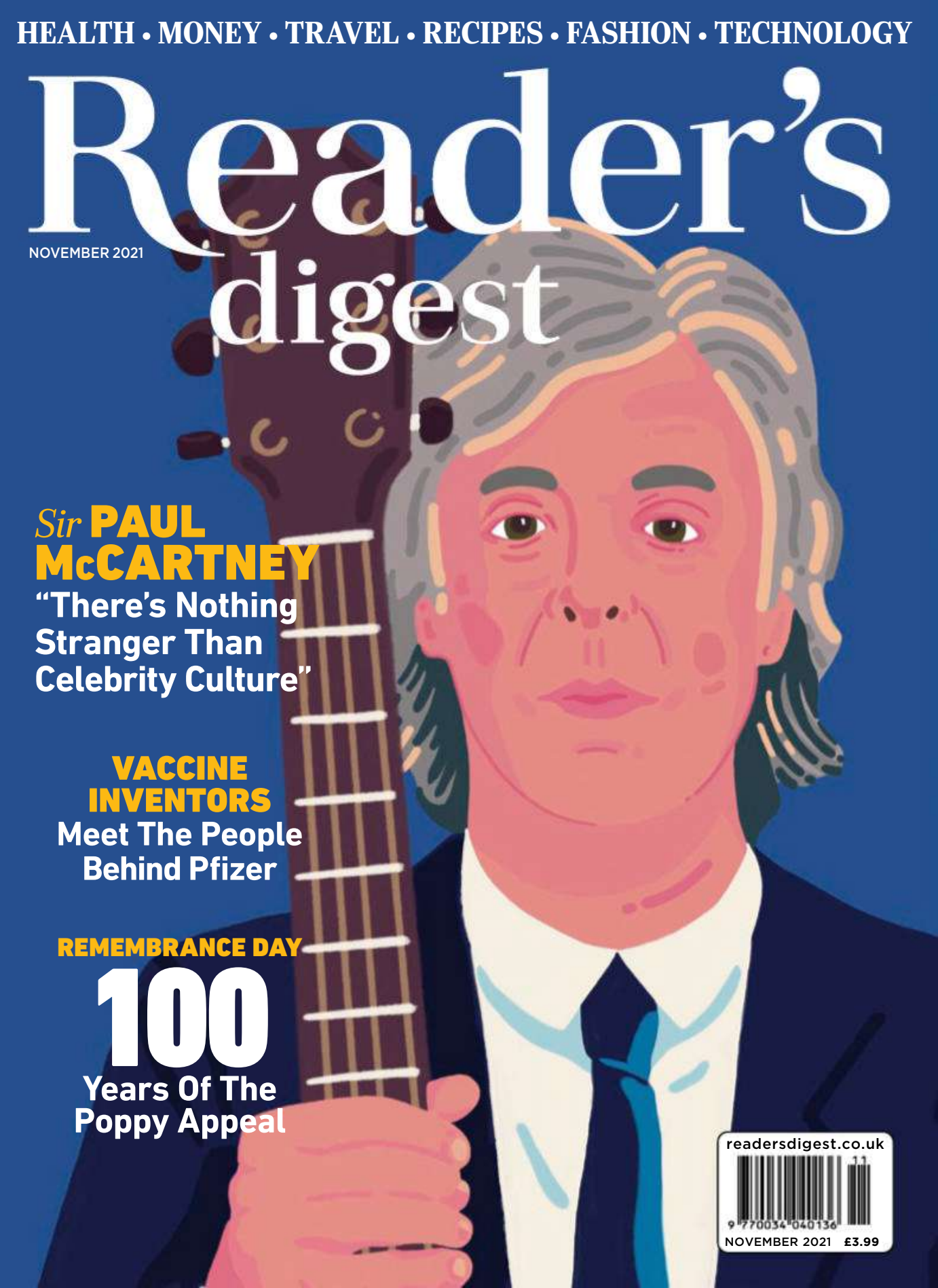
# Reader's digest

NOVEMBER 2021



## *Sir* PAUL McCARTNEY

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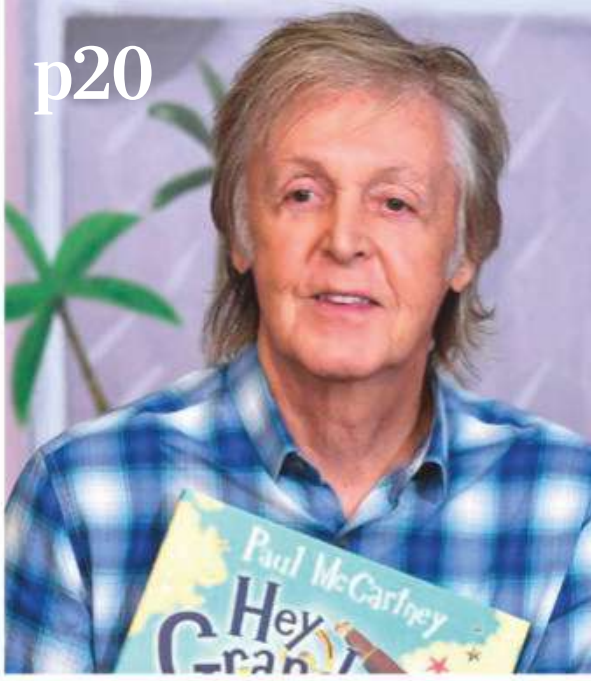


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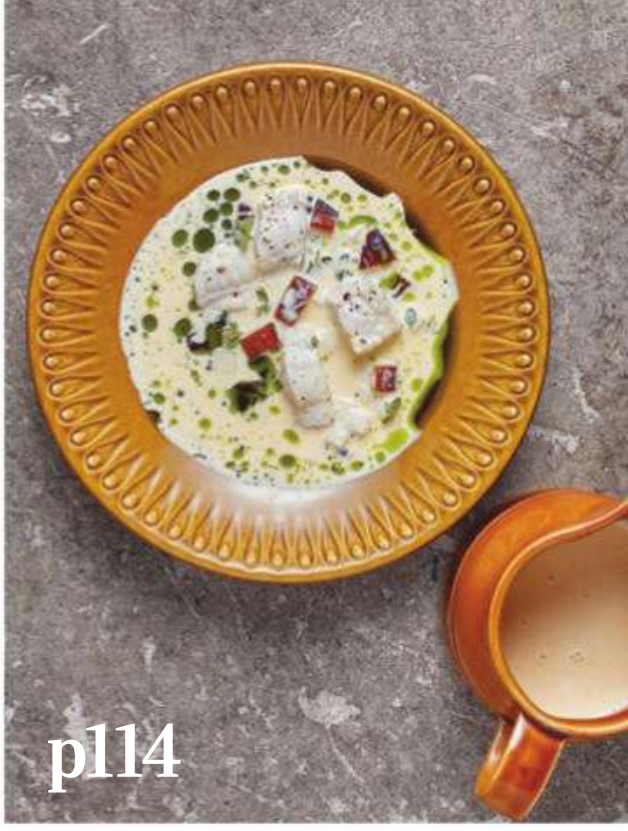



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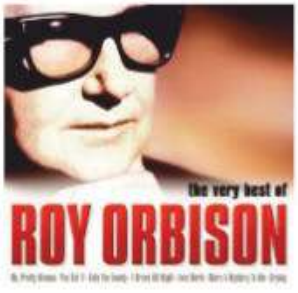

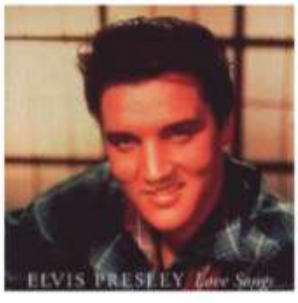


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# In This Issue...

I spent the first throes of lockdown confined to my tiny London bedroom. I was bored. I was frustrated. I was missing friends. But just outside my window hung the bows of a huge horse chestnut tree. So close was this tree, that I could lean out of my window and pluck a shiny conker straight from its branches. As days wore into weeks and weeks into months, the tree proved a surprising comfort—home to a family of squirrels who kept me company, springing into eyeline out of nowhere as I tapped away at my laptop. When all else is chaos, trees remind us of the constancy of life. To remain rooted and wait for the storm to pass. On p82, five celebs join us to celebrate some of Britain's best-loved trees. Why not email us at readersletters@readersdigest.co.uk and let us know about your own!

Anna

He may be the godfather of the modern pop song and the founding member of the biggest rock band on the planet, but when you read an interview with Paul McCartney, the feeling you get is one of talking to a good, trusted friend—the kind who's generous with their time and always willing to lend some wise but unimposing advice. On p20, the beloved ex-Beatle talks about living one day at a time, his unique gift for songwriting and his laid-back relationship with fame, which he considers "boring."

And on p118, we explore a different kind of celebrity: a culinary one. To celebrate the upcoming release of restaurant drama *Boiling Point*, we take a look at some of the greatest films celebrating the frienzied world of kitchens and the eccentric chefs who run them.

Eva

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# Over To You

LETTERS ON THE *September* ISSUE

**We pay £50 for Letter of the Month and £30 for all others**

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

I strongly agreed with what Dr Max Pemberton had to say in his September column, "What A Pill Can't Fix".

As suffering from financial and emotional problems is widely known to contribute to a patient's health concerns, it is simply not acceptable for the expectation that a miracle pill can be given to bring about a magic cure.

Doctors need to see the bigger picture before they can make a true diagnosis and bring about an improvement to their patients' lives.

A friendly and non-judgmental chat can often go a long way to

What A Pill Can't Fix

making a person feel valued and acts of kindness lift the mood and decrease stress levels.

Just being more considerate as a nation could drastically reduce mental health issues that we face.

— GLORIA WILDING, *Merseyside*

## BELOVED NOTRE DAME

As an avid student of history I remember watching with abject horror the Notre Dame Cathedral fire in 2019 and weeping at the loss of history. Therefore it was great to read in the September issue the article "Saving Notre Dame" where we were updated on the progress to save and restore this wonderful building. It was great to read that a lot of it was actually still intact, such as priceless works of art. It was also pleasing that historians and other experts are using this opportunity to study the building, especially the parts that were exposed during the fire in order to learn as much as they can prior to its restoration.

— LUKE RUSSELL, *Wakefield*

## JON SHOULD RULE THE WORLD

If there is one person who ought to be in charge of the world it is Jon Batiste. In September's "If I Ruled the World" column, he champions honesty, such an outdated virtue that I'm surprised that's it's even still in the dictionary.

I particularly appreciated his stance on reparations for Black Americans. History exonerates those brave explorers who "discovered" the Americas and regarded it as their own despite the fact that it was already inhabited. In the North, the First Nations were herded into reservations and in the South, people were sold as slaves. In years to come, the owners, not the slaves, would receive compensation when slavery was abolished!

That well known idiom "money talks" reminds us all too clearly where the future lies, but it's worth remembering that wealth and honesty can work together—there's nothing to lose!

—PHILIPPA SAMPSON, *Torquay*

## MOTHER KNOWS BEST?

I was most interested in your feature "8 Medical Myths Debunked For Good" by Susannah Hickling. Growing up, I was constantly bombarded with strange medical tales that often scared me and even prevented me from sleeping. I remember my mother telling me that reading under the bed covers with a torch at night would make me go blind. As an avid reader, of course I disobeyed her, but I would worry all night about losing my sight!

In a modern world of great medical advances, it's funny how we still look back at "old wives' tales" to seek out answers to health issues. Perhaps we seek out nostalgic ideas to remind us of when life was just simple and uncomplicated.

—SUSANNA LEWIS, *Knaresborough*

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*Mortgage Solutions, UK house prices to increase by 30% in the next decade

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**SEE THE WORLD...**

*turn the page* →

# ...DIFFERENTLY

**This spectacular Dragon temple,** named Wat Samphran, is located in the province of Nakhon Pathom, roughly 25 miles west of Bangkok, Thailand. Finished in 1985, this Buddhist temple is 262 feet-high, a nod to Buddha himself who died at the age of 80. The 17 floors of the pink tower are filled with statues and shrines including a giant bronze Buddha. The exterior is scaled by the impressive green dragon. Rarely frequented by tourists, visitors are encouraged to perform luck bringing rituals while there, such as saying a prayer while touching the dragon's massive claws or stroking the dragon's chin on the top floor.

PHOTO: © AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES/MLADEN ANTONOV

PHOTO: © ANNETTE RIEDL/DPA

# Mattress Madness

*This month, a rare trip to a bed warehouse proves to be quite the experience for Olly*

**We're getting a** new mattress. I decided this after waking up with a bad neck and then a bad back. The alternative remedies (eat fewer carbs, lose weight, face the fact that getting gout and then a back condition might possibly point to a drinking problem) were too appalling to contemplate. So, we're getting a new mattress.

I was further convinced this was the correct course of action when, looking back through my inbox, I deduced we had purchased our current bed in 2013. Eight years—the magic number! This triggered my internal monologue to replay all those ads I'd inadvertently absorbed: "It's recommended to change your mattress every eight years." Recommended by whom? Not, perchance, the very fellows hoping to shill me a mattress?! It's a long-term ad strategy, but it works—like that big billboard promoting our local undertaker.

I nearly did the millennial thing, and ordered online; being a podcaster, I almost felt obliged to use one of the "disruptor" brands who advertise exclusively on podcasts, including mine. "Delivered in a box, with a 30-day free trial!", the script says. But don't you have to actually lie down on a bed first, before deciding if you like it? And wouldn't it feel tremendously wasteful to audition multiple mattresses in your own bedroom, and then summon a courier to pick up each unwanted

Olly Mann presents *Four Thought* for BBC Radio 4, and the podcasts *The Modern Mann*, *The Week Unwrapped* and *The Retrospectors*



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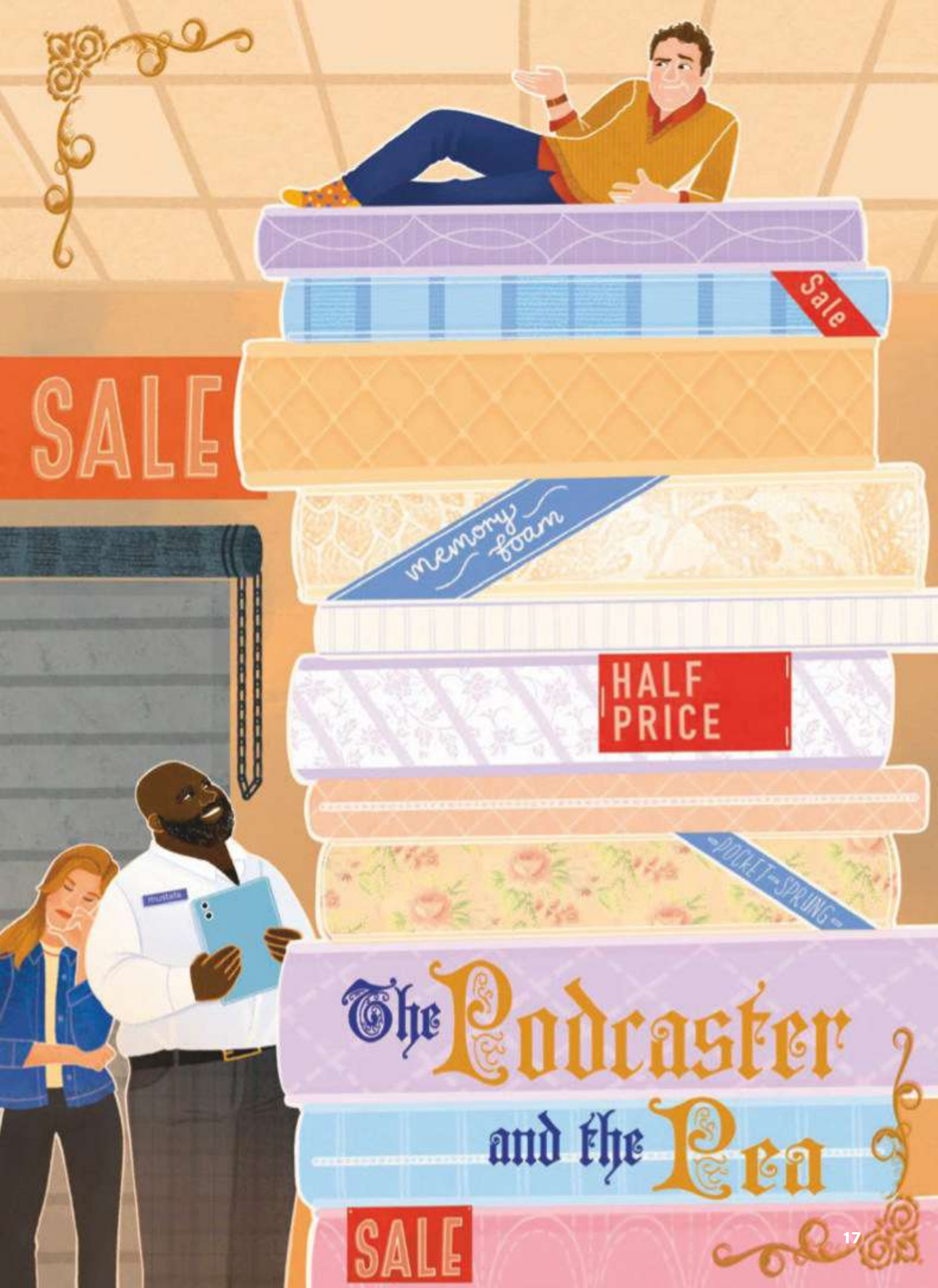
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one? Mightn't you end up with a mattress you detest, out of sheer embarrassment?

So, we stomped off to our nearest "bed warehouse"—is there a less cosy, snuggly word in the lexicon than "warehouse"?—to investigate our options. It turns out the big retailers, eyeing the threat from the bed-in-a-box brigade, have responded by imposing a layer of dubious "artificial intelligence" over what should be a straightforward shopping experience.

The manager, Mustafa, met us at the door (we're not mattress VIPs, he just happened to be standing there) and led us over to some sort of experimental bed-computer, as one might expect to find in a Beverly Hills clinic. He inputted our vital statistics with deep seriousness, like a security officer at Gatwick.

"What age bracket are you, please?," he asked, gesturing at broad categories that seemed purpose-designed so we didn't have to shriek "FORTY!" out loud.

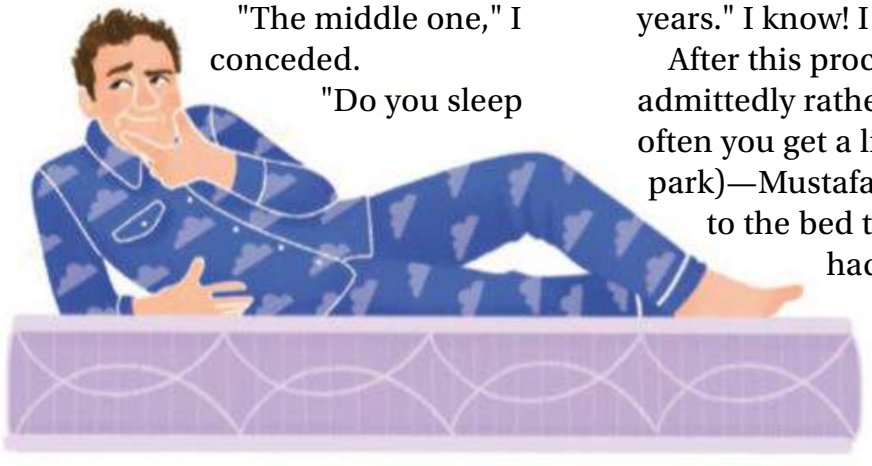
"The middle one," I conceded.

"Do you sleep mostly on your side, or your back?," was his next question; to which I thought, *how would I know, I'm asleep?*, but answered with, "a bit of both?." He nodded sagely and did some more button-pushing.

"And which of you sleeps on the left, and who on the right?". He looked me up and down as I responded, tilted his head, and tapped a top secret code into the touchscreen, which presumably translated as "husband fat, wife thin." Then he invited us to lie down.

There was a TV screen on the ceiling above us; this made me feel like one of Peter Stringfellow's conquests. A video played, supposedly occupying us while the bed-computer "calibrated" our profile, but which was evidently intended to impart some soft-sell messaging, masquerading as pop psychology: "Did you know you spend half your life in bed?," that sort of thing. Oh yes, and the Eight Years message again. "It's recommended to change your mattress every eight years." I know! I KNOW.

After this process, which was admittedly rather reviving (it's not often you get a lie-down in a retail park)—Mustafa guided us over to the bed that the algorithm had "chosen" for us, based on our "information". Stop press: the bed was not in the



sale (despite the fact that the "sale" seemingly included everything else in the store, and began the day the dinosaurs died).

Mustafa talked us through the three types of filling: pocket sprung (too springy), memory foam (too foamy), and then, WHAT FRESH HELL IS THIS pocket sprung with a "cooling gel topper". I had no idea "toppers" were even a thing, and definitely hadn't known that I wanted one, but on trying it out, it seemed the most comfortable. Slowly, I was talked into buying one. Imagine my surprise when it turned out to be the most expensive!

You're a walking wallet in a bed warehouse. Ordinary punters have no hope of knowing when we're being fleeced. I mean, put me in the tech section of a department store, and I can assess whether the innovations on offer are pointless trinkets or life-changing innovations. Place me in a Menswear section, and I know which styles match my taste. But, a bed warehouse? A shop I only visit once a decade? I have no context. I don't know whether a "topper" is a frivolous addendum, like a slushie maker, or a crucial bit of apparatus, like a Magimix.

After some amateurish haggling on my part, Mustafa sold us yet more (pillows, a mattress protector, an entirely pointless insurance scheme), but with a seemingly generous discount, thereby creating the illusion we were getting a bargain, despite us spending more; and we left, £1,500 lighter. He's good, that Mustafa. I'll tell him so, in another eight years' time. ■

## Guy Fawkes Trivia

*1. In what year was the failed gunpowder plot?*

2. The plotters planned to assassinate which king?

*3. Was Guy Fawkes Catholic or Protestant?*

4. Which gingerbread cake is associated with Guy Fawkes Night?

*5. In which English city was Guy Fawkes born?*

6. Who was the leader of the Gunpowder plot? It wasn't Guy Fawkes!

**Answers**: **1.** 1605 **2.** King James I. **3.** Catholic, the plot was to end anti-Catholic discrimination by Westminster. **4.** Parkin . **5.** York. **6.** Robert Catesby.

# *Sir Paul McCartney*

# "There's Nothing Stranger Than Celebrity"

By Danny Bowman

Why, even after six decades, Sir Paul McCartney's magical mystery tour rolls on into the next town

**EVEN IN HIS** very darkest moments, there's always been something decidedly light-hearted about Sir Paul McCartney.

He is the iconic principal of popular music; he's the man who'll wink during a photoshoot or pull out a two-finger peace sign mid-interview. He's the guy who'll bob down the street humming or whistling a song by one of his favourite contemporaries—think John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Brian Wilson, Stevie Wonder; yet also modern "equals" such as Beck and St Vincent, and even new-wave soul/dub experimentalists Khruangbin.

When tragedy and disappointment has come—the death of John Lennon in 1980, the sad passing of wife Linda who lost her battle against breast cancer in 1998, the very public collapse of his marriage to Heather Mills a decade later—it's never been long before the singer, songwriter, producer and, let's be frank, godfather of the modern pop song, has rallied. Almost impossibly quickly he would be snapped loafing down the King's Road in a pair of shabby cords, or back on the Radio City airwaves pushing a new solo project, or flitting between expressions of awe and bemusement on the front row of one of daughter Stella's catwalk shows.

Sir Paul's ability to "let it be" is perhaps like that of no other. For a start, few can rival his time at the coalface of the music industry. Across 60 years, rarely has he afforded

The Beatles in 1960. From left to right: Ringo Starr, George Harrison, John Lennon, and Paul Mccartney

himself more than a few months away to recharge. "I'm not sure if it's habit or necessity," he begins, "but it feels incredibly awkward to me not to be making music; and when I've got a bunch of songs coming together it feels similarly unnatural to keep them to myself—I just want to share them."

**The resilience McCartney shows** is matched only by a creativity that crosses almost every accepted genre. The proud Liverpudlian may not have ever strayed into David Bowie-esque levels of reinvention—"there's no drum 'n' bass in my back catalogue" he laughs—but a passion to experiment with and experience sound through the perspectives of others is a redeeming feature of his six-decade-long pursuit of music mastery. From the perfect pop of early Beatles into darker "world music" sounds that reflected the band's literal journey across far-flung continents; from sultry folk to the later prog-rock sounds of Wings; from Eighties influences that included Michael Jackson and Johnny Cash, right through hooking up metal numbers with Foo Fighters and hip-hop segments alongside Kanye West. Crikey, he even guested alongside John Lennon on a Rolling Stones track in 1967… what rivalry?!

It all just proves that those who have arrowed accusations of arrogance at McCartney are missing the target. Far from these collaborations being the actions of

GRANGER/SHUTTERSTOCK

an artist who believes that whatever he makes is marketable, there's a much simpler humility in his work—a desire to continue testing and trialling new formulas. "The truth is I'm a music fan," he concedes. "I just love the lyrics and sounds and beats and harmonies. A great track is a great

"THE TRUTH IS I'M A MUSIC FAN. A GREAT TRACK IS A GREAT TRACK NO MATTER IF IT'S POP, ROCK, R&B, METAL, WHATEVER"

track, after all, no matter if it's pop, rock, R&B, metal—whatever. And seeing how others go about their art means I can still build my own knowledge. I want to do that.

"I don't make records with the intention of being edgy or clever or popular for the sake of it," he says, although it's easy to forget that much of The Beatles' early work showcased technical and sonic innovations that were simply game-changing.

"The truth is, there's some music you feel as though you are writing it for the audience; while in other tracks you're doing it more for yourself; but I wouldn't be doing any of it if I didn't get that same thrill I've always had. It doesn't matter how much other stuff in the industry has changed, the feeling you get from music will always be the same. It's an excitement, an energy."

**Through everything that's stayed the same** for Sir Paul, it's clear the rapid changes in the industry—most brought on by the advent of digital music—have left the ground underfoot rougher than it once was.

"Nothing subscribes to the old rules anymore. Does that fill me with sadness? Perhaps a little," he concedes. "It's a very different landscape, and the truth be known I'm just glad to still be a part of it, so I can't criticise it too much.

"I do miss the days when singles were a prelude to the album, and then the tour after that. I miss physical formats, but at the end of the day, you know, there are no hard and fast rules for promoting a record, for getting your face and your voice out there; and actually, there never were."

Perhaps McCartney's antidote to the way the industry has changed so profoundly can come through other creative processes. His recent foray into children's book-writing seems to abide by many of literature's traditional sensibilities, and his quirky Grandude and Nandude characters have also allowed him to repackage that chipper, cheerful, cheekiness of his we first witnessed when The Beatles leapt onto the scene with "Love Me Do", a single that celebrates its 60th anniversary in October 2022. Indeed, McCartney recently revealed

himself as the man behind a series of mysterious ads placed in the *Daily Record, Manchester Evening News* and *Liverpool Echo*, guiding readers to Twitter handles #Where'sNandude? and #I'veSeenNandude! The 79-year-old, worth an estimated £1.2billion, certainly has the resources to dabble

## "THERE'S NOTHING STRANGER THAN CELEBRITY CULTURE. I'M NOT A FAN. ALL THE BRAVADO AND STATUS BECOMES BORING"

in a spot of guerrilla marketing, and used the space to promote the latest installments in his book series, named *Grandude's Green Submarine*.

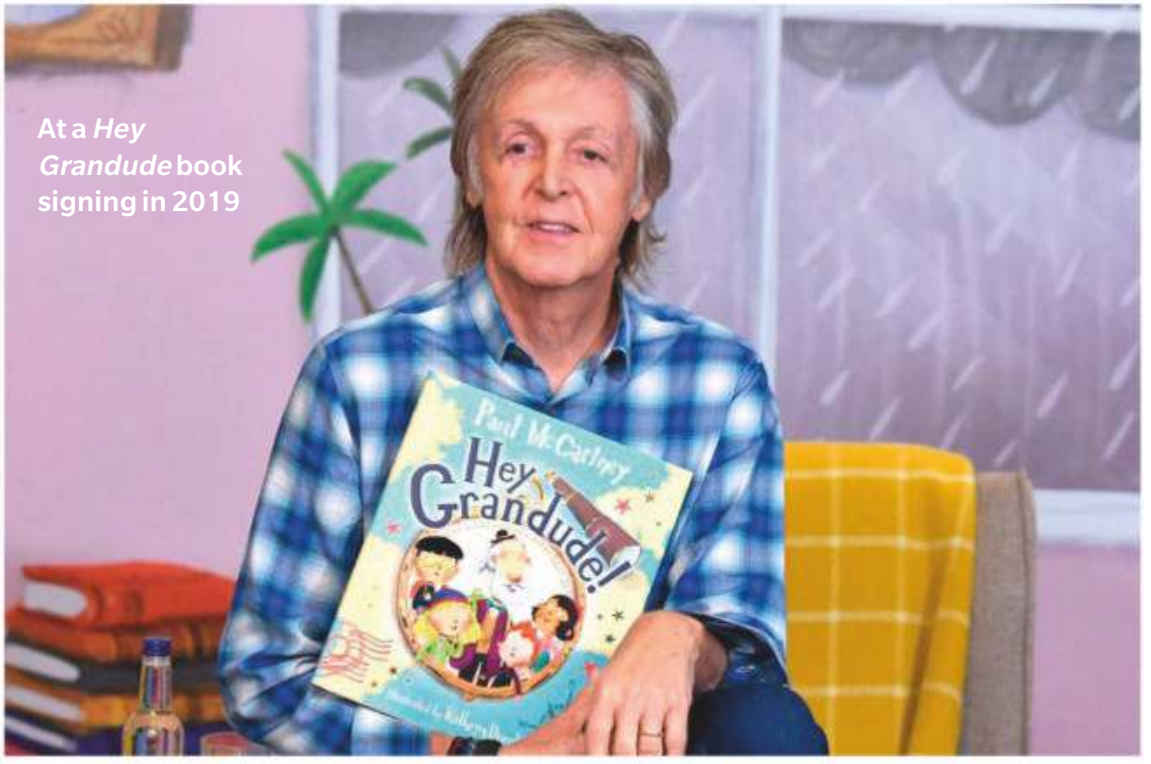
"It's been a lot of fun," he says, "and writing for the grandchildren is always such a thrill. With everything else that's been going on, I think it's important to remove ourselves, to fantasise. I've always loved transporting myself to different places, or inside the mind of characters. It gets the mind away from the chaos, the monotony."

McCartney has a long and decorated history of doing just that. Even in The Beatles' pomp, the likes of "Eleanor Rigby", "Yellow Submarine", "Sgt Pepper", "Blackbird"—which detailed the American civil rights situation of the Sixties—and others were diversions from the self, or from a cliched two-and-a-half minutes about falling in love. McCartney has always been an artist obsessed and intrigued not by his own existence, but by others'. And not just in big gestures either—the premise extends all the way down to photo opportunities and autographs.

"I've always said that at the end of a photo opportunity you feel a bit empty," he says, segueing sharply. "It's like the exchange is for nothing more than a kind of badge. Great badge too—what you've usually got is a ropey photo with a poor backdrop and me looking a bit miserable. I won't typically do the photo thing these days because I think we should all be more excited about having a conversation. So let's chat, let's exchange stories. I actually find people more receptive to that anyway. Social media has lessened a lot of the mystery where recognisable people are concerned. I really want us to get back to the raw value of actually having a conversation with someone. It's nice."

And as for the era of the autograph, McCartney is glad to see the back of it. "It always struck me as a bit of a strange thing. 'Here, can you write your name down on the back of this till receipt please?'. 'Why? We both know who I am,'" he laughs.

"Listen, there's nothing stranger than celebrity culture, and I'm not




At a *Hey Grandude* book signing in 2019

ANTHONY HARVEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

a fan of it. I'd much rather just meet people and talk to people on a level. You get to the point where all the bravado and status becomes boring, and you yearn for normality."

Regretfully, that's probably not something McCartney is ever going to be able to claim for himself; at least, not in a public space. "I've always been the guy who will go on the subway or will take a bus. Some famous friends of mine say, 'Don't you take your bodyguard?,' and I'll say, 'No, I try to escape the bodyguard!'".

Even recently, McCartney was seen hanging about at a bus stop in Liverpool on a trip back to the city where it all started, to mark what would have been wife Linda's 80th birthday. Contemplative and sentimental, to a point, the star is clearly able to compartmentalise life events in living for the moment. And why not, he is happily married again, to American Nancy Shevell, and has five accomplished children.

**Commentators note** how grounded McCartney is, though the truth is you would have said exactly the same of a 22-year-old McCartney as The Beatles sat on the cusp of true global stardom when they cracked America in 1964. "They were exciting times," he says. "The US was just a place read about and seen on black and white television screens. Heading out there was incredibly exciting and almost like a parallel universe; but we still wanted to do it with a sense of

The Beatles seeing the sights of Washington in 1964

ANL/SHUTTERSTOCK

control. We had said to our manager, 'Look, we're not going to America until we have a number one record,' which, when you think about it, was really quite a bold move. The reality was we'd seen other stars from Britain go there and just fade into the general scene. We knew we were going to wait till we'd got a chart-topper, and we did eventually with 'I Want to Hold Your Hand,' and the thing just hit the roof. It was important for us, though. We were confident lads, but a lot of that was down to the fact we had a number one record with which we could back up the bravado."

Over the years since, amidst the plectrums and the plaudits, there have been a bevy of half-truths, mistruths, and downright lies. Flying pizzas from London to New York, laying 25,000 flowers by the M4 to advertise a photography exhibition of Linda's, turning a yacht into a 24-track studio.

The excesses are tempered by the reservations—purchasing all the land around his farm on the Mull of Kintyre to create an exclusion zone being one. In many headlines, the scrutiny doesn't even allow for the facts; and don't get Paul started on the various movies about the four-piece.

"I've seen a lot of them," he smirks, "and often the reality has been left somewhere else. I will often give a pass to the actor because they are doing their best interpretation of you, but it always feels a bit strange, as it would do for anyone watching themselves."

**Perhaps one of the strangest** rumours about McCartney is that, for the most commercially successful songwriter in history, he can't actually read music. "Actually, that one is true," he laughs. "I can't read music. It's the strangest thing. When I took lessons as a kid, it seemed a bit too much like homework to me. It wasn't until later I started to enjoy it, then I tried to play catch-up, but I just couldn't get my head around reading music and being so regimented in what to play and how to express it.

"IF I WANT TO SAY ANYTHING, I'LL WRITE A SONG. THAT'S A WONDERFUL GIFT BESTOWED ON ME BY WHO KNOWS WHAT"

It seemed to go against something in my core—I wanted the freedom and the creativity. I didn't want to toe the line, and I don't think there are many musicians that do really. I do think it's about time I learned, but I guess I've done OK without it!"

As for the future, pausing isn't an option; it never has been. Even during COVID, *McCartney III*, his 26th studio album, was released. The sell-out global tour to accompany it didn't happen, and that arguably leaves Sir Paul with unfinished business he'll most likely want to tend to before his next collection of tracks finds themselves being mixed and mastered. "If I didn't have a new project or a challenge to conquer, I can only imagine I'd start thinking further or deeper about the reality of death, and that's not something I want to do, particularly," he laughs.

"Death won't ever scare me—when you get to my age you have to accept your mortality; you have to realise it's a finite thing and the belief that your life will trip on forever becomes fractured; but it's still some distance away for me, of that I'm sure."

In truth, McCartney's grasp on the fragility of life has always been there; certainly, since John Lennon was snatched away from him. The effect it has had on the Liverpudlian songwriter and cultural bastion of the modern generation is certainly to enjoy each day as it comes, but also to go about his business with sensitivity, calm, light-heartedness, and humility.

Paul McCartney in 2021 is as gentle and open as at any point in his impossibly decorated past—the awards, the success, the money all fade into the background for a man entertained not by the trappings, but the sheer art of his craft.

"If I want to say anything, I'll write a song; so that song becomes all I really need in the world. That's a wonderful gift bestowed on me by who knows what. The magical mystery tour rolls on, and everyday I'm grateful." ■

Coming to fame in the 1960s, Engelbert Humperdinck has sold more than 140 million records worldwide. He looks back on his childhood in India, how "Release Me" changed his life and why he never got to work with Gorillaz

DPA PICTURE ALLIANCE ARCHIVE / PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

# I REMEMBER...

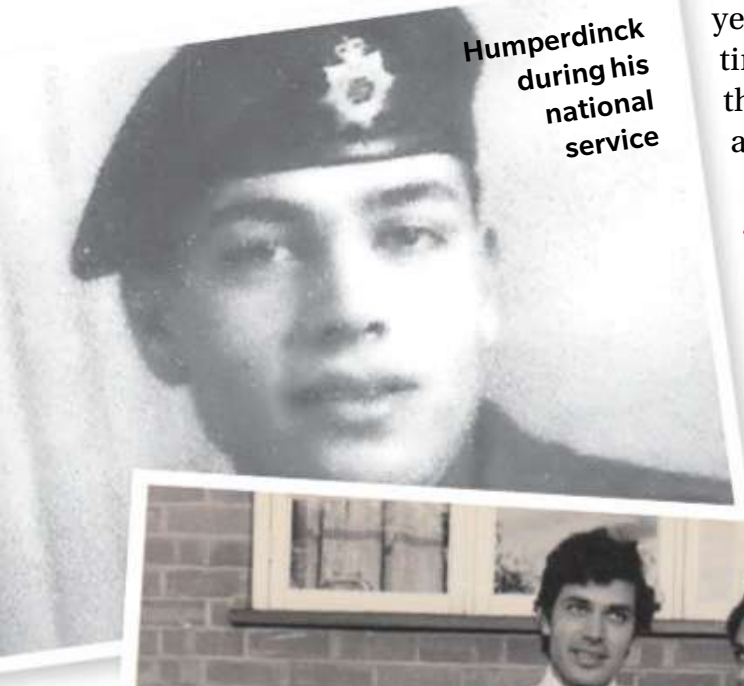
# Engelbert Humperdinck

...I WAS BORN IN MADRAS IN INDIA and the house we lived in was like a film set. It had a playground with swings and I can honestly say I had a lovely childhood—apart from the time I fell into a timber pond at age seven and almost drowned. I was walking on the logs, one of which turned over and I went under the water. I couldn't swim and neither could my brother Irwin but he lay on his belly, grabbed my hand and pulled me up. He saved my life.

...MY FATHER ALWAYS WORE HIS UNIFORM. He was a captain in the army and everywhere we went in the car he would be saluted. That made me very proud of him. My mother was a housewife so she didn't have a career. Mind you, I think having ten children was work in itself. I was the ninth born and an 11 and 3/4 lb baby.

...THE FAMILY WOULD GET TOGETHER AND SING UNDER THE STARS. I learned how to sing harmonies from my eldest sister Olga but, as I grew up, I didn't plan on being a singer—I originally wanted to be a saxophone player.

We moved to Leicester when I was ten and that's when I learned how to play the sax. By the time I was a teenager I was playing in local clubs, which eventually led to me also singing and doing impressions under the name of Gerry Dorsey (which is my real surname). I was very good at impersonating Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis and Frankie Vaughan.

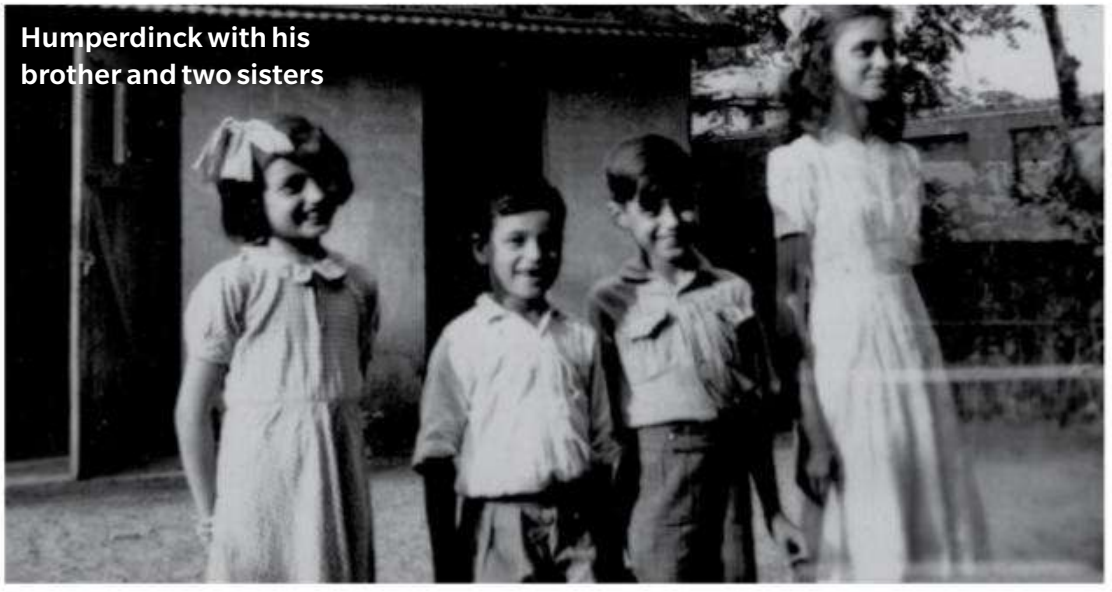


Humperdinck during his national service

...MY NATIONAL SERVICE WAS IN GERMANY. I was a despatch rider and a driver; I drove a 15-tonne truck. I was stationed there for two years in the 1950s and I had a great time, being schooled in the ways of the world and learning how to be a gentleman.

...I MET MY WIFE PATRICIA WHEN I CAME OUT OF NATIONAL SERVICE. That was in 1956 at a dance hall called the Palais de Danse, located in Leicester.

I saw this lovely young lady,


Humperdinck with his brother and two sisters

asked her to dance and that was the start of our courtship. We were married in 1964 and it's been a wonderful relationship based on love and respect.

...IN 1961 I WAS STRUCK DOWN BY TUBERCULOSIS. I was doing a charity show in Manchester and I collapsed. The next day my mum took me to the doctor, who said I had a throat infection—but Mum wasn't happy with that diagnosis and she insisted I have an X-ray. Within an hour I was in hospital on what they used to call the "Death Row" and I was there for six months in total, followed by a year and a half of convalescence.

...I HAD MANY RECORDING CONTRACTS but I never had one hit in those early days. Then in 1965 I met Gordon Mills, who also managed Tom Jones, and he said, "You tried long enough with your real name so let's give you a new one." He came up with Engelbert Humperdinck, after a German composer, and it's such a hard name to sign because you start it one day and finish it the next! But it's served me well, of course.

...THE RELEASE OF "RELEASE ME" IN 1967 CHANGED EVERYTHING. That said, it took three months for it to take off and that was only when I performed it on *Sunday Night At The London Palladium*.

Sales went up to 80,000 a day, which would be unheard of today. It went to number one in the UK, as well as in several other countries, and it stopped The Beatles having their 13th chart-topper [with "Penny

Lane" /"Strawberry Fields Forever"]. The funny thing is, it was released on January 13—so 13 was lucky for me but unlucky for them. Success in the States was ensured when I went on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. That was the biggest showcase that you could have back then and I ended up with a number four hit over there.

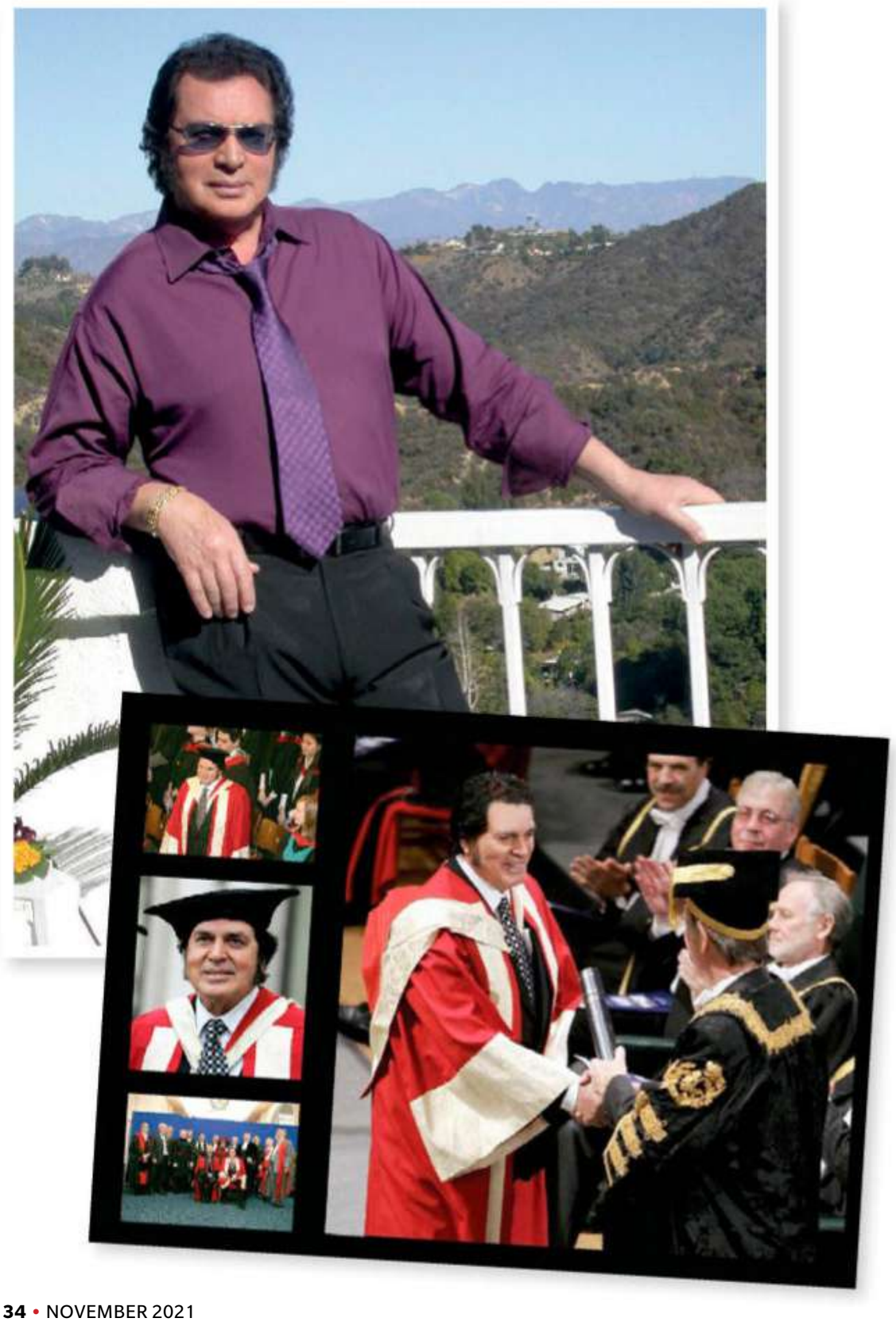
…I ENDED UP GETTING MY OWN TV SHOW. It was called *The Engelbert Humperdinck Show* and it aired on ATV in the UK and ABC in the US, where it was sponsored by Fabergé. That's how I ended up meeting Cary Grant, because he was their creative consultant.

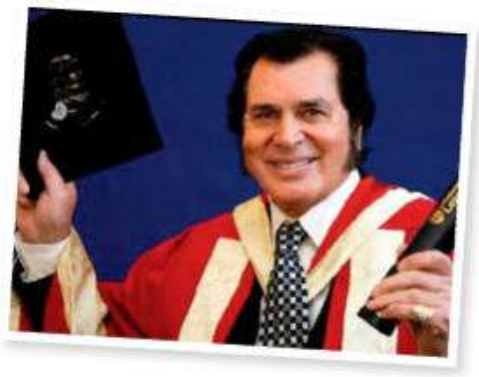
He became a big fan and would come and see various shows of mine in the States with his daughter Jennifer. That was fantastic, to have a man of his calibre coming to my concerts. And I had some amazing guests on my TV show, such as Tony Bennett, Jerry Lewis, The Four Tops, Shirley Bassey—some really massive stars.

…THE 1970S TOOK ME TO LAS VEGAS. That came about when I sat down with all the agents who were looking to represent me over there. Because of the jet lag I fell asleep at the table but fortunately Gordon Mills stayed awake and found the right agent for me. Then they took me around all the hotels to see which one I'd like to perform in.

I ended up at the Riviera, which was where Dean Martin regularly performed so that was the start of our friendship. He put his name on the marquee as "Dean Martin Presents Engelbert Humperdinck" and I'm the only person he ever did that for, which was very flattering.

…DABBLING IN ACTING WAS GREAT FUN. In the 1980s I was on shows such as *The Love Boat*, *Fantasy Island* and *Hotel* and I could also have had a career in the movies, since Hollywood was interested in me. But Gordon decided it would take me off the road for too long and of course he wanted the capital from that, which meant my movie career went down the drain. At the time, though, I didn't know that he was throwing any of the scripts that were sent my way into the garbage can.





…I COULD HAVE WORKED WITH GORILLAZ. They wanted to work with me on their 2010 album *Plastic Beach,* but I had a manager at that particular time who had no idea what music was about. He was a financial genius but he didn't know who Gorillaz were and he didn't even tell me they wanted to duet with me. What a huge mistake that was! Of course, when I heard about it later, I fired him.

…ALTHOUGH I'M NOW BASED IN THE US, I STILL HAVE A HOME IN LEICESTER. We haven't been back recently because sadly my wife isn't very well right now; she has Alzheimer's. But we're trying everything we can to help her. Hopefully when she's a little better we'll both get on a plane and fly home so she can see the beautiful garden again.

…I'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH A WONDERFUL FAMILY. We have three sons and a daughter named Louise, who is a songwriter in Nashville; Scott, who is in management in Australia; Jason, who is a salesman in Arkansas; and Bradley, who rigs up film sets. I didn't spend as much time with them when they were young as I should have, but I was out earning a living as a security blanket for my family. But I'd always get home to Leicester as often as I could.

…I WAS PICKED TO REPRESENT THE UK AT EUROVISION IN 2012. There was a great deal of excitement when I was walking around London, with people yelling, "Go get 'em, Engelbert!" I got an amazing amount of press out of it and I felt so proud to be representing the country. But when it came to the contest in Azerbaijan I was the first to go on and by the time everyone else had performed it felt like I'd been forgotten, plus there's always a lot of politics involved, but I really enjoyed doing it.

…PRINCE PHILIP KNEW ALL OF MY SONGS. I've met him as well as the Queen on several occasions, including at Buckingham Palace and a Maundy Thursday service in Leicester. I once played for him at a charity show where he sang along from start to finish. ■

As told to Simon Button

Engelbert's wife sadly passed away after this interview was written

His UK Reflections tour begins on October 31. For more info and tickets, visit engelbert.com/tour

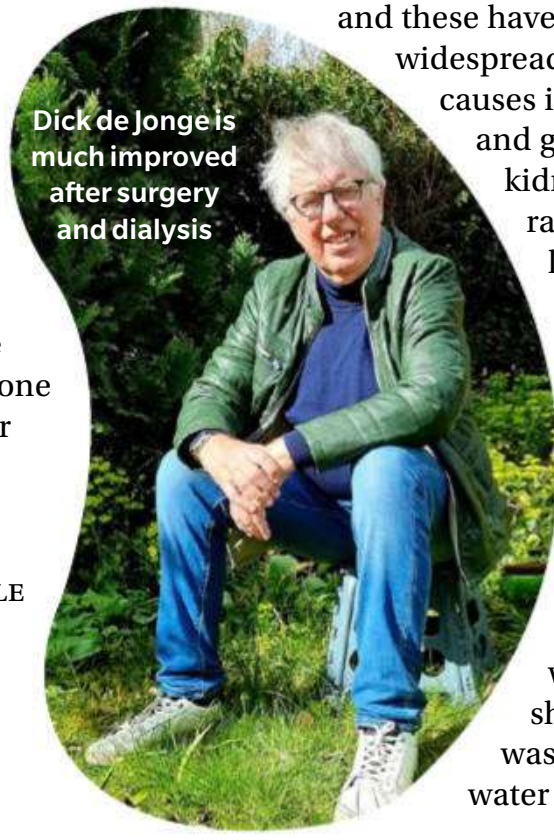
# Outsmart Kidney Disease

## Symptoms are elusive—here's what you need to know

BY *Lisa Fields*

DICK DE JONGE used to ride his bike to work daily, but in 2014, he noticed his cycling was getting slower. "I thought there was something wrong with my bicycle," says de Jonge, 69, of Groningen in the Netherlands. But he was the one slowing down: he didn't know it, but he'd lost much of his kidney function. One night he went to bed, exhausted, and slept for two days.

Concerned, he saw his doctor. His blood-pressure was so high that he was sent to the hospital, where a urine test confirmed kidney problems. De Jonge had cancer in one kidney, and the other functioned at just seven per cent.



Dick de Jonge is much improved after surgery and dialysis

THOUGH MANY PEOPLE don't realise they have it, kidney disease doesn't discriminate: it affects men and women of all ages and ethnicities. Last year, it became the tenth-ranked cause of death worldwide, according to the World Health Organisation, rising from 13th in 2019. Says Dr Raymond Vanholder, president of the European Kidney Health Alliance in Brussels, one in ten people in Western Europe, and one in 13 people in Central and Eastern Europe, have some form of kidney disease. And according to some estimates, twice as many Europeans could have kidney disease in ten years' time.

Why is it so prevalent? Because the two most common causes of the disease are hypertension—high blood pressure—and diabetes, and these have become more widespread (less-common causes include infections and genetic conditions; kidney stones can also raise risk for chronic kidney disease).

The cause for Dick de Jonge was likely high blood pressure. His cancerous kidney was removed, and he started dialysis. Dialysis does what kidneys should do: remove waste, salt, and extra water to prevent them

ILLUSTRATION, PREVIOUS SPREAD: ©ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

from building up in the body; keep potassium and sodium at safe levels; and help control blood pressure. Typically, dialysis is needed when kidney function is less than ten per cent. Depending on the type of dialysis, sessions last a few hours and are done three times a week.

About six months later, de Jonge's kidney function improved to 25 per cent, where it still hovers, and he was able to stop dialysis. He takes medication for hypertension and sees his nephrologist every three months. "When they tell you that you have to get dialysis, it's very scary," he says. "Until that time, I was in control of my life. When I learned I had kidney disease, I wasn't in control anymore."

MOST PEOPLE DON'T know how important their two kidneys are to overall health. When they're functioning properly, these organs filter waste and excess fluid out of the bloodstream, turning it into urine. But excess sugar in your blood as a result of diabetes damages your kidneys' filter over time. And uncontrolled high blood pressure can eventually cause arteries around the kidneys to narrow, weaken, or harden, making it difficult for them to deliver enough blood to kidney tissue.

"The kidney is extremely dependent on blood flow," Dr Vanholder says. "Once the vessels or the heart get damaged, that has a negative impact on the kidneys. When they do not work, you get an accumulation of metabolites, and these damage the heart and the vessels. So, you get this vicious circle." People with kidney disease tend to die of complications from associated conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and even cancer, before they die of kidney failure.

## SCREENING

After age 50, the kidneys gradually become less efficient, and after 60, a moderate loss of function can be normal, as long as there are no other signs of kidney disease. "Ten per cent of function is lost from the age of 50, every ten years," Dr Vanholder says.

Because moderate loss of kidney function is a normal part of ageing, experts actually recommend against screening everyone for kidney disease. Instead they advise annual testing for those at increased risk: with diabetes, hypertension, or a family history of kidney disease. Though most often there are few or no symptoms, people of any age with fatigue, trouble sleeping, blood in the urine, or dry, itchy skin should get tested.

## TREATMENT

Depending on the severity, people may simply need to monitor their

condition or limit salt in their diet. If medications are required, they include ACE inhibitors and ARBs, two classes of blood-pressure-lowering medication that slow down or prevent further kidney damage.

"Medication dramatically reduces the risk of dialysis and the worsening of kidney function," says Dr Michel Jadou, who is co-chair of the Brussels-based organisation Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes.

A newer drug class, SGLT2 inhibitors, are prescribed for diabetes and limit the body's absorption of salt, which helps kidney function. "Several clinical trials have been published that demonstrate how these drugs protect against heart failure and cardiovascular death, and slow down the progression of chronic kidney disease," says Dr Juan Manuel Buades Fuster, chief of nephrology at Hospital Universitario Son Espases in Mallorca, Spain.

"They are probably the most important drugs in kidney protection in the last decade." And sometimes, dialysis, or even a transplant, is necessary.

Claire Pullinger is managing her genetic kidney condition

## Claire Pullinger, UNITED KINGDOM

IN 2017, CLAIRE Pullinger believed that she was in perfect health. She'd been a vegan for years and stayed in shape by running. But after her dentist sent her for testing because her gums looked anemic, she got some surprising news: her kidneys were functioning at 50 per cent capacity, although she hadn't experienced any problematic symptoms. Soon after, she was diagnosed with silent polycystic kidney disease, a genetic condition in which cysts develop within the kidneys and can damage them to the point of failure.

"It came as a bit of a shock," says Pullinger, 53, of Dorchester, England.

For some people with early-stage kidney disease, lifestyle improvements may be enough to ward off other treatments. Pullinger is one such patient: so far, she has maintained kidney function thanks to her diet and exercise habits. She avoids salt, coffee, alcohol, and sugar, and continues to exercise regularly. She maintains a healthy weight, and meditates to reduce stress levels.

Her kidney function has stabilised at around 35 per cent.

"I try to be quite disciplined with my diet," says Pullinger. "I think if you treat your body with that kind of respect, then you are rewarded."

Daniel Gallego is glad to have the option of home dialysis

## Daniel Gallego, SPAIN

IN 1993, DANIEL GALLEGO of Valencia, Spain, then age 20, sought medical attention for a swollen ankle, and was surprised to receive a diagnosis of kidney disease; it turns out he had been retaining fluid because his kidneys weren't working well.

Swelling in the lower leg extremities, with no pain, can be an early sign of kidney disease. The body can retain sodium when the kidneys don't filter the blood as efficiently as normal.

For a long time, Gallego tried to manage his disease with diet and medication. He even had a transplant in 1998 that failed. In 2019, after several years of going to a dialysis centre three times a week, Gallego was able to switch to home dialysis. Now he performs dialysis on himself five times a week, on his own schedule.

When younger people are diagnosed with chronic kidney disease, doctors work quickly to help them preserve their health, since younger patients expect to have decades of life ahead. Says Dr Jadoul, they should do what they can to avoid health risks overall. Those things, he says, include keeping to a healthy weight, watching cholesterol and blood-pressure levels, exercising, and avoiding any kind of smoking.

Young adults who follow these lifestyle habits and their doctor's advice tend to live longer.

"Any percentage of kidney function that can be maintained for long periods of time will help people to live longer," Dr Jadoul says. He says he has patients with serious kidney disease that manage it for decades.

Home dialysis isn't always an option, but for those who can do it, it's often an advantage.

Says Daniel Gallego, who is now 48 and acts as president of the European Kidney Patients' Federation, "I can do it during the morning, or if I have meetings, I can do it at night. It gives me a lot more freedom."

## Elizabeth MacKenzie, CANADA

WHEN ELIZABETH MACKENZIE, 69, of Vancouver was in her late forties, she was diagnosed with silent polycystic kidney disease (like Claire Pullinger) after frequently feeling exhausted and noticing blood in her urine, a possible symptom in people with kidney disease.

Fifteen years later, her kidney function dropped to 15 per cent, prompting her doctor to recommend transplantation.

Elizabeth MacKenzie is doing well after a kidney transplant

MacKenzie was fortunate: her sister-in-law donated her kidney, so MacKenzie avoided going on a waiting list. "Many people wait for years," she says. "Before the transplant I was feeling tired, but since then I have been leading an almost normal life. I'm sure it was a good thing to have the transplant before it was absolutely required. It likely meant a quicker recovery."

Transplant recipients take immunosuppressant medication to prevent organ rejection, and their kidney function is lower than a healthy person's. But they can live active lives. "Transplantation has a significant impact on quality of life," Dr Buades Fuster says. "It is never the same as having healthy kidneys, but it is by far the best kidney replacement therapy at the moment."

Some experts believe that if more kidneys were available for transplantation, most people under age 60 could avoid dialysis. Many patients are placed on transplant waiting lists before beginning dialysis. For healthier candidates, it's a temporary holding measure until an organ becomes available.

"There are not enough kidneys,"

### FUTURE TREATMENTS

Researchers worldwide have been working to develop a wearable artificial kidney, which would function 24 hours a day and eliminate the need for dialysis. One has been tested in humans, but this technology may not be ready for a few years. Since there aren't enough human kidneys for transplantation, genetically engineered pig kidneys could become an alternative. Human testing may begin in two to three years. Creating 3D-printed kidneys—combining kidney cells with other biomaterial—may become reality within a few years. For now, the organ is too complex to replicate. Researchers are working to create new kidneys from stem cells, although this is in the early stages.

Dr Buades Fuster says. "Most patients under 60 will need dialysis before they get a kidney transplant."

## REDUCE YOUR RISK

FORTUNATELY, YOU CAN take steps to help lower your risk of kidney disease. Aside from controlling high blood pressure and avoiding diabetes, see your doctor regularly. Maintaining a healthy weight also helps, as more weight makes kidneys work harder. Over time, that extra work can cause kidney damage.

And it's important for anyone, not just kidney patients, to avoid adding salt to food. Excess salt raises blood pressure and makes kidneys work harder. Consuming fewer than five grams of salt a day could could save 2.5 million lives annually. Because most salt we consume is in prepackaged foods, World Health Organisation member states have agreed to help reduce their population's salt intake by 30 per cent by 2025, and have instituted policies to reduce salt in packaged foods and restaurant meals. Two more things to be aware of: first, ask your doctor if you should avoid NSAID painkillers (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). One recent study found that 41 per cent of people with kidney disease took NSAIDs, not realising the damage they could cause. "For those in high-risk groups, short-term use for heavy pain may be okay, but long-term use is not desirable," says Dr Jadoul. Second, avoid smoking; it damages blood vessels and speeds up the deterioration of the kidneys. People who don't smoke are more likely to preserve kidney function. ■

### Marvel-lous Performances

*It seems like almost every actor has a Marvel stint under their belt these days. But can you name the actors from the Marvel Cinematic Universe based on three of their other films?*

**Anne Wheeler in *The Greatest Showman*, Marie in *Malcom and Marie*, Lola the Bunny in *Space Jam***

**Zeus Carver in *Die Hard: With a Vengeance*, Mace Windu in *Star Wars*, Richmond Valentine in *Kingsman: The Secret Service***

**Eva Khatchadourian in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, Karen Crowder in *Michael Clayton*, Madam D in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.**

ANSWERS: 1) Zendaya 2) Samuel L Jackson 3) Tilda Swinton

# AND BREATHE...

*Want to blow out all the candles on your cake when you're 75 or climb three flights of stairs without gasping at the top? There are ways and means to boost your lung power*

Susannah Hickling is twice winner of the Guild of Health Writers Best Consumer Magazine Health Feature

**Breathe in through your nose** When it's hot and dry or very cold, or you're in a dusty or polluted environment, try to inhale through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Our nasal passages filter the air we breathe and regulate its temperature and humidity. When you breathe in through your mouth, everything heads straight for your lungs.

**Do simple workouts that strengthen chest muscles** Try this easy exercise to help your chest expand, and increase your lung capacity: lie on your back with knees

bent and feet flat on the floor. Put your hands behind your head and bring your elbows together so that they nearly touch. As you breathe in, let your elbows drop to your sides slowly so that your arms are flat on the floor when your lungs are full. When you exhale, raise your elbows again.

To strengthen and train your diaphragm so that every breath you take is easier, breathe from your abdomen for at least five minutes every day. To do this, inhale deeply through your nose, filling your lungs from the bottom up. Your stomach should push outwards. Breathe out and repeat.

**Walk up and down the stairs several times a day** This makes your heart beat faster, and helps keep both your heart and lungs in good shape. Brisk walking or riding a bicycle will have the same effect.

**Wear a face mask to do work around the house** Ideally, avoid household products that emit toxic fumes, but if you are using, say, an aggressive oven cleaner or are sanding paint, make sure you wear a face mask to prevent dangerous fragments reaching your lungs. Ensure you keep the room well ventilated at the same time.

**Tackle sleep apnoea** It's time to ask your partner the question we all dread the answer to—do I snore? If the answer is yes, see your GP and ask for a referral to a sleep centre so you can be checked for sleep apnoea. With this condition, you can momentarily stop breathing numerous times during the night. And, shockingly, it can damage your lungs almost as badly as smoking, and worsen asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). But the good news is it can be treated.

PEOPLE WHO ATE MORE THAN FIVE APPLES A WEEK HAD IMPROVED LUNG FUNCTION

**Eat apples—and fish** A study from the University of Nottingham found that people who ate more than five apples a week had improved lung function, less wheeziness and fewer asthma-like symptoms. And eating more Omega-3 fatty acids, found in oily fish such as salmon and sardines, can help reduce inflammation, which is linked to airway problems such as asthma. ■

*For more weekly health tips and stories, sign up to our newsletter at readersdigest.co.uk*

# Apps That Could Save Your Life

### What3words

This free download is one of a growing number of smartphone apps that could mean the difference between life and death. What3Words divides the world into 3x3 metre squares, giving each one a unique combination of three words. This allows emergency services—or anyone else you give the location to—to reach you. It is used by the vast majority of emergency services in the UK, not to mention other control centres around the world, and has been credited with saving thousands of lives.

### WhatsApp

Lots of us use WhatsApp for messaging and calling, but did you know it also has a Live Location feature that can let a loved one know your whereabouts in case you're in danger? You simply press the + key in a chat, select "Location", and then press "Share Live Location", which enables any participants in the chat to see your location in real time for the duration you choose.

### SkinVision

You will have to pay for this digital skin check app, either on an ad hoc or subscription basis, but with an estimated fifth of skin cancers going undiagnosed during lockdown, it could be well worth it. You simply take a photo of any suspicious spot or mole with your phone and you'll then receive a risk indication from SkinVision's clinically validated technology within 30 seconds. This might include a recommendation to see a doctor. But don't rely on an app to reassure you—if you're worried about a skin blemish, go to your GP.

### Stay Alive

With mental health problems on the increase, not helped by the pandemic, this suicide prevention app could be extremely helpful. Developed by Grassroots Suicide Prevention, it offers a wealth of resources, ranging from strategies for staying grounded when you feel overwhelmed, to breathing exercises to direct links to national and local crisis resources.

### St John Ambulance First Aid

An app like this is more useful for saving someone else's life than your own, but arguably it's a must-have on your smartphone. It gives advice in dealing with emergencies, including choking, allergic reactions and performing CPR. You don't have to have an internet connection in order to use it. ■

# *Ask The Expert:* Men's Wellbeing

Dr Luke Pratsides is a GP in the NHS in London and lead GP at private digital men's health clinic, Numan

**How did you become an expert on men's health and wellbeing?**
I've always had an interest in men's health. I see men who ignore, ignore, ignore, leave, leave, leave until they are really worried or can't do daily activities. I want to help them engage more with healthcare.

**What factors contribute to mental health problems in men?**
Traditionally men don't talk about their health. There is a manly culture of getting on with it until breaking point—an anxiety attack might bring them in. Social media can be a factor; we are bombarded with people's projections of their ideal self and you can feel your life is terrible.

**What are the signs that a man might be in distress?**
There might be an increase in alcohol intake or reduced appetite. Perhaps they can't get to sleep or are going to bed later. A lack of enjoyment in things they did before can be a subtle sign, as can not taking care of themselves—dirty clothes or being unshaven. If a man has lost his job or been bereaved, even if he projects himself as doing well, it's important to check in on him.

**At what point and where should a man seek help?**
Seek help as early as possible. Once you're in crisis, it's harder to recover. GPs are very adept at common mental health problems such as depression or anxiety. There are also confidential charities such as Strong Men and the Samaritans.

**How can men maintain their health and wellbeing long term?**
Speak to a family member or friend if something isn't right. If you are isolated, your GP is always there. Get outside in the fresh air. Vitamin D from sunshine helps mental health. Exercising—even a brisk walk five times a week—releases mood-boosting endorphins. Keep alcohol to 14 units a week, as too much can worsen mood. Make sure you eat regularly and healthily. ■

For more information, visit **numan.com**

# Puppy Love

*This month, Dr Max reflects on the transformative power of pets*

"PLEASE DON'T KILL HIM" said Mrs Reid with tears in her eyes.

"I'm really sorry," I said, hardly able to look at her. A nurse held her hand and tried to comfort her.

"He's been my entire world for 14 years, I don't know what I'll do without him," she sobbed. She wasn't talking about a person. She was talking about Toby, her King Charles spaniel. Mrs Reid had come into hospital after she'd fallen. She had Parkinson's disease, meaning her mobility was deteriorating. It was the second time she'd fallen in just a few weeks, and this time she'd broken her hip. While the hip had now been fixed, it was clear she was too frail to go home and the social workers had arranged for her to go into residential care. A neighbour had been looking after Toby, but with the prospect of Mrs Reid no longer going home and as she had no family who could take him, it looked likely that he'd have to be put down. She was pleading with me to allow her home but it was simply too dangerous. But for her, this was preferable to no longer having her beloved Toby.

This situation is far from unique. Research has found that each year

Max is a hospital doctor, author and columnist. He currently works full time in mental health for the NHS. His new book, *The Marvellous Adventure of Being Human*, is out now

thousands of dogs are put down because their owners go into care homes. Over 100,000 have to be rehomed. Thankfully I spoke to a kindly social worker who eventually found a residential home for Mrs Reid that would allow her to take Toby. But these places are few and far between. I think we need to seriously re-examine what's happening here. It seems profoundly wrong. There is no doubt that we are a nation of animal lovers. Many of us consider our pets to be part of the family and there's a fair few of us, I suspect, that actually prefer our pets to a good number of people. Humans have a remarkable capacity to draw comfort and support from animals. For older people like Mrs Reid, they are often the primary source of companionship and about a quarter of all pensioners have a pet. Yet when they come into hospital or a care home, they are denied this relationship.

**I'VE WORKED ON** several wards with PAT dogs (Pets As Therapy) and I've seen first hand the change in patients. It's remarkable how people suddenly come out of themselves, smile and laugh when a dog nuzzles up to them. It's more effective than any antidepressant and it encourages people to get up out of their seats better than any physiotherapist. Imagine the benefits after a lengthy hospital stay if it was your own dog that visited. We would never consider denying people visits from relatives, so why is it acceptable to do this with a dog? Despite a dog often being the most important relationship in their life, when people's health starts to fade and they have to consider going into residential care, this relationship can be utterly destroyed. While the US, France, Norway and Switzerland all have laws forcing housing providers to accept pets belonging to elderly residents, studies have shown that around 70 per cent of care homes in the UK prohibit residents from bringing pets. This figure has risen in recent years and is likely to be due to increasing concerns around "health and safety". In contrast to this concern, however, research has concluded that they are "vital to elderly people's quality of life" and that having to move to accommodation without their pet was psychologically akin to bereavement and highly traumatic. It seems outrageous that care homes—whose purpose is to ensure their residents' welfare—are able to deny them something which has proven clinical benefits for their health. ■

SEVENTY PER CENT OF CARE HOMES PROHIBIT RESIDENTS HAVING PETS

# The Doctor Is In

*Dr Max Pemberton*

**Q: Dear Dr Max, I suffer from extremely painful and unsightly bunions. In summer I can let them "hang out" in sandals, but now winter is here I have to squeeze them into my shoes, which is really painful. Is there anything that can be done, or does the pain need to be accepted?** *- Emily, 59*

**A:** Emily, I suspect a lot of readers will have sympathy for you—bunions can be a real pain (excuse the pun). A bunion is a bony lump that forms on the side of your big toe where it meets the foot (called the metatarsophalangeal joint). This lump can make your big toe point inwards and push the other toes out of place. The lump has a tendency to rub when you wear shoes which can be very painful.

Bunions can be caused by conditions—such as rheumatoid arthritis—that cause joints to swell. Badly fitting shoes can also cause it—this includes high heels as they put a lot of pressure on the big toe joint. You can also get bunions on the other side of the foot, by the little toe. This is termed a bunionette, or sometimes a "tailor's bunion".

I certainly don't think you should just accept the pain, as there are various things that can be done. Sometimes all that's needed is a change in footwear. Wearing wide shoes with plenty of space for the toes, and heels no higher than two inches, can help. You can apply ice to the bunion to bring down swelling and take painkillers such as paracetamol. You can also see a podiatrist for advice about managing the pain including special pads, insoles and foam spacer that can be worn to protect the bunion and stop it hurting. If you're overweight, losing weight also helps.

Unfortunately the only way to get rid of them is through surgery. Luckily this is an effective operation although it does take a few weeks to recover from it. ■

Got a health question for our resident doctor? Email it confidentially to **askdrmax@readersdigest.co.uk**

ILLUSTRATION BY *Javier Muñoz*

**Advertisement**

# My sleep solution!

**Problems had been accumulating over time. Life for me had turned into a state of near-permanent panic as I obsessed about all the problems facing me.**

I couldn't sleep, I lost my appetite and I often suffered from migraines, brought on by stress, poor eating and the lack of proper sleep. Burn out was looming. I knew that I desperately needed a good night's sleep.

After reading about Melissa Dream™ an natural herbal supplement, I decided to give them a try and ordered a supply online. After only two days of taking the tablets, I noticed that I felt calmer and more positive because I was sleeping properly. I was relaxed in a way that was totally different to how I had been for ages.

I've been taking Melissa Dream™ for a month now and because I'm getting a good night's sleep, I'm so revitalised and full of energy that I know I can deal with anything life may throw at me. My husband, family and friends have all noticed the difference – I'm back to my normal self and it feels great!

*- Wendy.*

Melissa Dream™
Restful sleep
Lemon balm helps to find sleep
Food supplement • 60 tablets
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VEGAN

# The secret behind getting a good night's rest.

You'll spend almost one-third of your life sleeping, but while you're asleep, your brain remains amazingly active, creating memories and storing information. Some even think that our dreams can help us make sense of our lives. But that's not the only thing that sleep can help you do. Your physical health, mood, cognitive abilities, and even your body weight depend on the quality of your rest. Here is the secret to getting the good night's rest you've always dreamed of.

Many sleep and nutrition experts recommend checking that your vitamin and mineral intake meets your daily needs. Melissa Dream™ tablets from New Nordic™ are a Scandinavian herbal-based tablet with extracts and vitamins that will work to help maintain a restful sleep that lasts all night long.

They can help you feel refreshed when you wake, without making you feel sluggish like prescription sleeping pills can sometimes do.

In addition, Melissa Dream™ contains green tea with L-theanine, magnesium and B-vitamins. Just two tablets before bedtime will provide the correct nutrients for both nerve and brain functioning. These will accumulate in your body over time and make drifting off a lot easier (and quicker).

**Where to buy**

You can find Melissa Dream™ in Holland & Barrett and Leading Independent Health Stores. For an information leaflet call **0800 389 1255** or purchase online at **www.newnordic.co.uk**

**Order Melissa Dream™ today and get it delivered straight to your door.**

**Go to newnordic.co.uk hollandandbarrett.com or online health stores**

**OR CALL NOW 0800 389 1255**

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# Beat The Brain Freeze!

*If your mind goes blank, you're in good company—says our memory expert, Jonathan Hancock*

**OASIS LEGEND NOEL GALLAGHER** recently admitted that he's started forgetting some of his most famous lyrics during live shows, and making up nonsense to cover the gaps. But he's not letting the occasional memory lapse hold him back—and that's heartening, because most of us know these "brain freeze" moments only too well!

As Noel has discovered, they often happen when we're under pressure. Stress triggers emergency responses from our body and brain. And, suddenly, memory is way down the list of priorities.

But simply realising what's going on can be reassuring. And then anything you can do to relax should return at least some of your memory power.

I'll bet that Noel isn't the only performer who's feeling rusty after lockdown. Even deeply embedded knowledge can fade when it's not used, and we all need to refresh our memories occasionally. A few minutes recapping his lyrics should be enough to restore Noel's recall to full capacity.

Most people find that they can leave longer gaps between their revision sessions, and put in less effort to "top up" each time.

Another common part of Noel's experience is "overthinking": when you stop and focus on something that you normally do automatically, and find that you suddenly can't do it at all! Ever mistyped your PIN, then paused… and really struggled to remember it—because you couldn't let "muscle memory" work its magic?

Knowing things instinctively is great, most of the time. But it's a good idea to have reminders for the really important things. So change your PIN to a number that has associations for you. Or picture an image for that key song lyric, to give you something to hold on to if you lose your flow.

Maybe Noel has a different setup on stage these days, as venues adapt to the "new normal". Any change of context can damage recall—as you'll know if you've struggled to remember someone on a Zoom call, when you'd recognise them instantly in the office.

Once again, doing something simple like inventing a funny link between someone's name and their job can be invaluable. It gives you a hook to reach for if all else fails.

If you're concerned about forgetfulness, get some medical advice. But don't worry too much about the occasional brain blockage. Just don't panic and keep a few thinking tricks up your sleeve. ■

**Advertisement**

# NO MORE SHOULDER AND NECK STIFFNESS

**Marianne works in social and health care. It can be tough on the body, lifting and difficult postures - My shoulders and neck felt stiff. Now I take Free to Move™. No regrets, the tablets help my joints and help provide good mobility. No more stiffness.**

## Stiff shoulders and neck

Marianne is 57 years old and has worked as a social and health aid for 28 years. "I work evening shifts at a care centre. I need to be able to undertake lifting and difficult positional tasks. But I often suffer with sore arms & shoulders, which also caused difficulty sleeping and turning in bed. This started to affect my quality of life. I enjoy my job and hope to carry on for many years to come. I needed to find help.

## Don't dare stop again

– I tell EVERYONE that I take Free To Move™. In fact, I'm afraid to run out of tablets. I feel I have such good mobility and I am very happy. I feel mobile and ready for all the challenges coming my way.

*Free To Move™ contains turmeric which helps maintain healthy joints and good mobility*

## Where to buy Free to Move™

You can find Free to Move™ in Holland & Barrett and Leading Independent Health Stores.
For an information leaflet call **0800 389 1255** or purchase online at **www.newnordic.co.uk**

## TRY FREE TO MOVE

Joints, muscle and bone health are important to feel good and to maintain an active lifestyle. New Nordic has developed a tablet containing plant extracts and nutrients for joints, muscles and bones. Free To Move™ is based on passion fruit, black pepper, turmeric and pine bark. Turmeric helps maintain healthy joints and good mobility. The tablet also contains copper and manganese, which contributes to the normal formation of connective tissue plus vitamin C, which contributes to a normal formation of collagen that is important for normal functioning cartilage - a flexible connective tissue found in the joints between the bones. The tablet contains vitamin D and magnesium, which helps maintain normal muscle function and normal bones.

**ADVICE & QUESTIONS**
You are always welcome to contact our New Nordic helpline at
**0800 389 1255**

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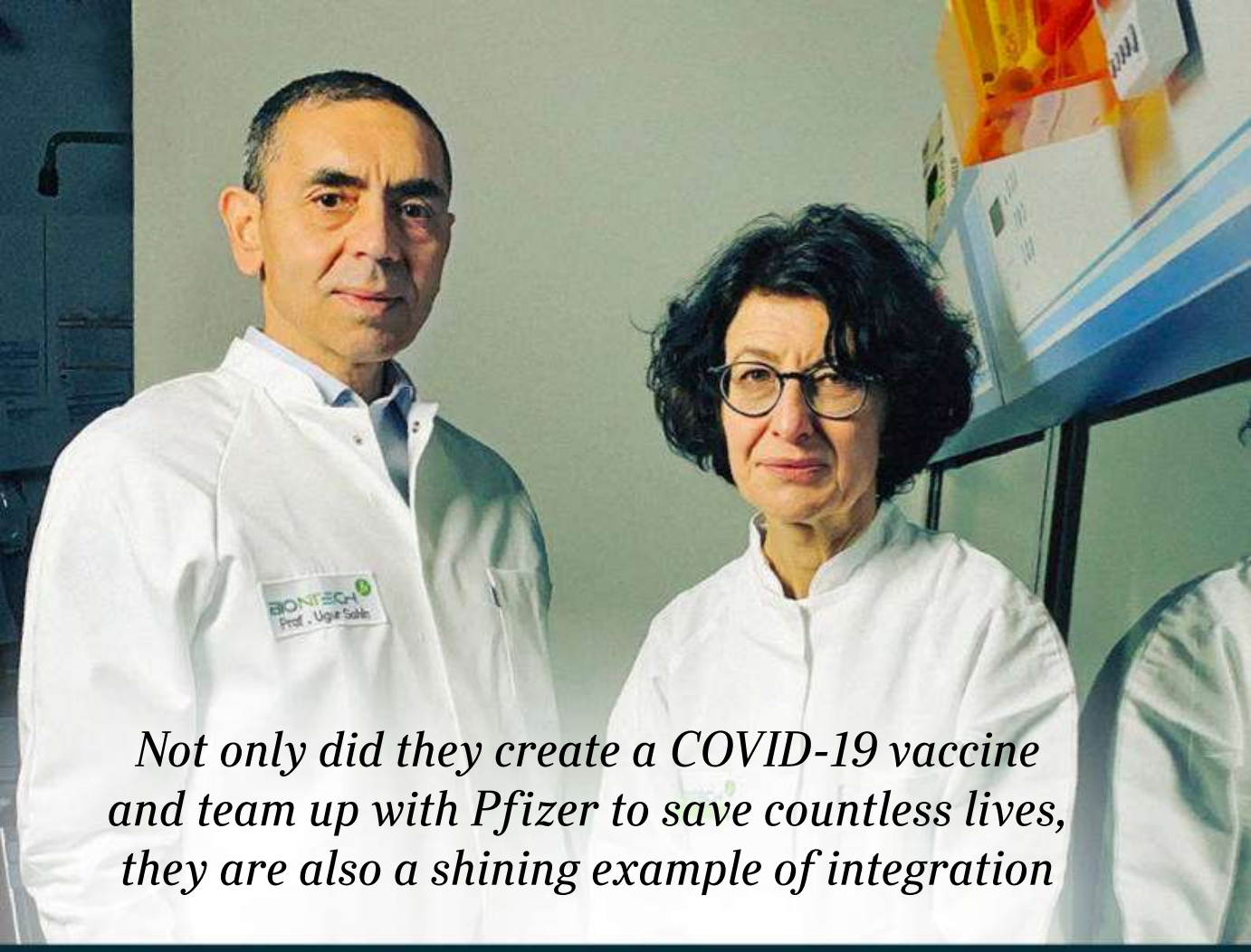
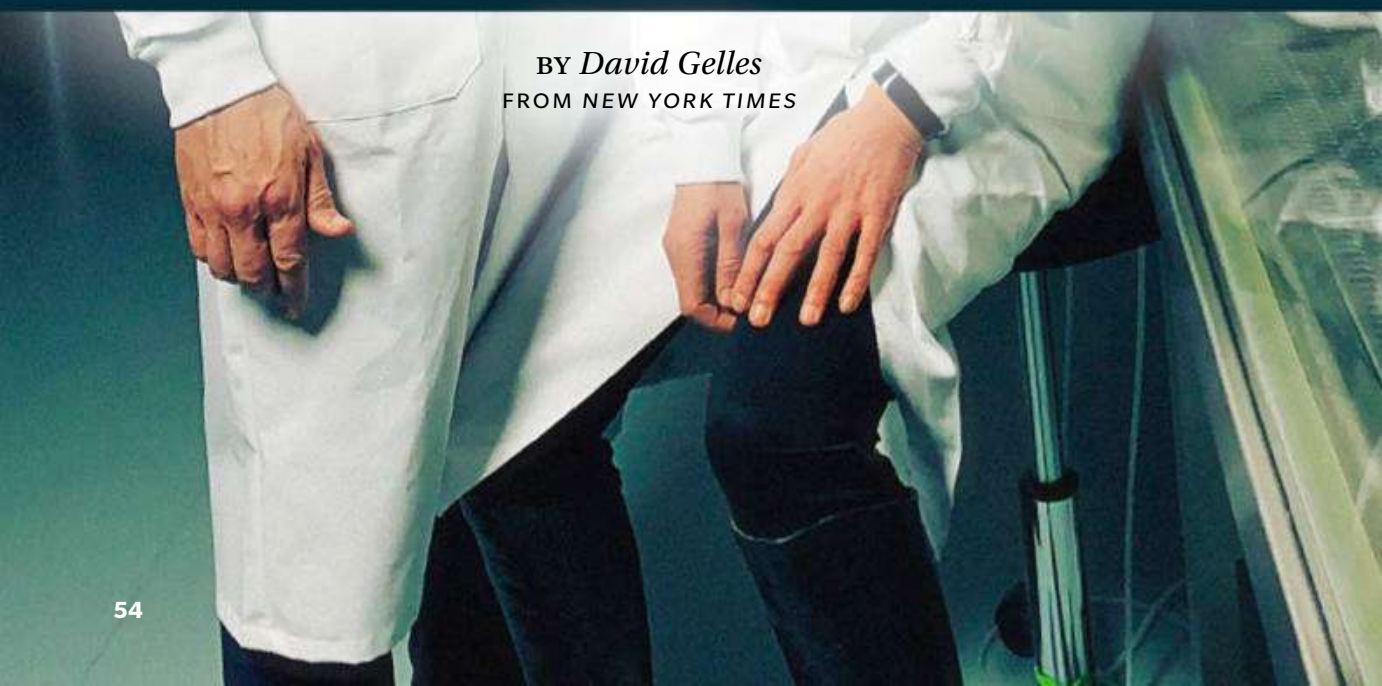
NEW NORDIC www.newnordic.co.uk **Online Store**




*Not only did they create a COVID-19 vaccine and team up with Pfizer to save countless lives, they are also a shining example of integration*

# THE COUPLE WHO HELPED SAVE

BY *David Gelles*
FROM *NEW YORK TIMES*



# THE WORLD

BioNTech co-founders Dr Ugur Sahin and Dr Özlem Türeci at the company's headquarters in Mainz, Germany

THREE YEARS AGO, Dr Ugur Sahin took the stage at a conference in Berlin and made a bold prediction. Speaking to a roomful of infectious-disease experts, he said his company might be able to use its so-called messenger RNA technology to rapidly develop a vaccine in the event of a pandemic.

At the time, Dr Sahin and his company, BioNTech, were little known outside the small world of European biotechnology start-ups. BioNTech, which Dr Sahin co-founded with his wife, Dr Özlem Türeci, and Austrian oncologist Professor Christoph Huber, was mostly focused on cancer treatments. It had never brought a product to market. COVID-19 did not yet exist. But his words proved prophetic.

Two years later, on November 9, 2020, BioNTech and US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced that a coronavirus vaccine developed by Dr Sahin and his team was more than 90 per cent effective in preventing the disease among trial volunteers who had no evidence of having previously been infected. The stunning results vaulted BioNTech and Pfizer to the front of the race to find a cure for a disease that has killed more than 4.2 million people worldwide.

"We believe it is the start of the end of the COVID era," Dr Sahin said in an interview at the time.

BioNTech began work on the

vaccine in January 2020, after Dr Sahin read an article in the medical journal *The Lancet* that left him convinced that the coronavirus, at the time spreading quickly in parts of China, would explode into a full-blown pandemic. Scientists at the company, based in Mainz, Germany, cancelled vacations and set to work on what they called Project Lightspeed.

"There are not too many companies on the planet with the capacity and the competence to do it so fast as we can do it," Dr Sahin said in October 2020. "So it felt not like an opportunity, but a duty to do it, because I realised we could be among the first coming up with a vaccine."

**ON THEIR WEDDING DAY, DR SAHIN AND DR TÜRECI RETURNED TO THE LAB AFTER THE CEREMONY**

After BioNTech had identified several promising vaccine candidates, Dr Sahin concluded that the company would need help to rapidly test them, win approval from regulators and bring the best candidate to market. BioNTech and Pfizer had been working together on a flu vaccine since 2018, and in March 2020 they agreed to collaborate on a coronavirus vaccine.

Since then, Dr Sahin, who is Turkish, developed a friendship with Albert Bourla, the Greek chief executive of Pfizer. The pair said that they had bonded over their shared backgrounds as scientists and immigrants.

"We realised that he is from Greece, and that I'm from Turkey," Dr Sahin said, without mentioning their native countries' long-running antagonism. "It was very personal from the very beginning."

DR SAHIN, 56, was born in Iskenderun, Turkey. When he was four, his family moved to Cologne, Germany, where his father worked at a Ford factory. He grew up wanting to be a doctor, and became a physician at the University of Cologne, where he earned a doctorate for his work on immunotherapy in tumour cells.

Early in his career, he met Dr Türeci. She had early hopes to become a nun and ultimately wound up studying medicine. Dr Türeci, now 54 and the chief medical officer of BioNTech, was born in Germany, the daughter of a Turkish surgeon who immigrated from Istanbul. On the day they were married, Dr Sahin and Dr Türeci returned to the lab after the ceremony.

The pair were initially focused on research and teaching, including at the University of Zurich, where Dr Sahin worked in the lab of Rolf Zinkernagel, who won the 1996 Nobel

PHOTO, PREVIOUS SPREAD: ©DINA LITOVSKY VIA REDUX IMAGES

Prize in medicine.

In 2001, Dr Sahin, Dr Türeci and Huber co-founded Ganymed Pharmaceuticals, which developed drugs to treat cancer using monoclonal antibodies.

Seven years later they co-founded BioNTech, looking to use a wider range of technologies, including messenger RNA, to treat cancer. "We want to build a large European pharmaceutical company," Dr Sahin said in an interview with the *Wiesbaden Courier*.

Even before the pandemic, BioNTech was gaining momentum. The company raised hundreds of millions of dollars and now has more than 1,900 people on staff, with seven offices across Germany and two in the United States. In 2018, it began its partnership with Pfizer. In 2019, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation invested $55 million to fund its work treating HIV and tuberculosis. The same year, Dr Sahin was awarded the Mustafa Prize, a biennial Iranian prize for Muslims in science and technology.

Dr Sahin and Dr Türeci sold Ganymed for $1.4 billion in 2016. Two years ago, BioNTech sold shares to the public; as of July 2021, its market value stood at more than $54 billion, making the couple among the richest in Germany.

The two billionaires live with their teenage daughter in a modest apartment near their office. They ride bicycles to work and they do not own a car.

"Ugur is a very, very unique individual," said Albert Bourla, Pfizer's chief executive. "He cares only about science. Discussing business is not his cup of tea. He doesn't like it at all. He's a scientist and a man of principles."

In Germany, where immigration continues to be a fractious issue, the success of two scientists of Turkish descent was cause for celebration.

"With this couple, Germany has a shining example of successful integration," stated the conservative current-affairs site Focus.

A member of Parliament, Johannes Vogel, wrote on Twitter that if it was up to the far-right Alternative for Germany party, "there would be no #BioNTech of Germany with Özlem Türeci & Ugur Sahin at the top."

"If it were up to critics of capitalism & globalisation," he added, "there would be no cooperation with Pfizer. But that makes us strong: immigration country, market economy & open society!"

Dr Sahin said that when he and Dr Türeci learned about efficacy data, just one year ago, they marked the moment by brewing Turkish tea at home. "We celebrated, of course," he said. "It was a relief." ■

Christopher F Schuetze contributed reporting from Berlin

FROM *NEW YORK TIMES* (NOVEMBER 10, 2020),
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PROMOTION

# A new kind of LUXURY

Immerse yourself in quintessential Dorset life and don't lift a finger with English Cottage Vacation, which offers a unique blend of rural charm and five-star luxury

A stay with English Cottage Vacation is far more than your typical luxury cottage experience; it's an "appanage", a term that hosts Nathan and Laura Kurton use to define their new holiday concept's special attributes.

This is a tailor-made, ultra-luxurious, completely private experience that comes with one all-inclusive price. To top it off, the level of care and attention to detail that you'll experience elevates English Cottage Vacation above other luxury options. This is where the nation's reputation for legendary elegance meets exceptional hospitality.

English Cottage Vacation centres on Well Cottage, an 18th-century thatched gem that sleeps up to six guests. You'll find it nestled in the quaint and characterful hamlet of Bedchester in rural Dorset. If you're keen to roam further afield during your stay, you can travel southwest to the county's famous Jurassic Coast, or head inland and discover Downton Abbey's real-life double Highclere Castle, as well as Stonehenge, the Cotswolds, Glastonbury and many more nearby iconic destinations.

While you have complete control over your itinerary and how you spend your time, you won't have to do anything for yourself. Having spent 10 years working on high-end, luxury charter yachts, Nathan and Laura decided to anchor the quality of their seafaring hospitality expertise to their homeland. As "live-in hosts", Laura is your housemaid and personal chef, providing gourmet dining for three (or more) meals of the day, with drinks and snacks to suit every occasion available on demand. Meanwhile Nathan is your personal chauffeur, tour guide, waiter and barman.

Well Cottage combines the simplicity of traditional English rural life with superlative modern service – including total flexibility and privacy – usually the preserve of charter yachts and five-star hotels. Thanks to Nathan and Laura's passion for – and knowledge of – their country, your English Cottage Vacation will be truly unforgettable.

English Cottage Vacation is currently taking bookings for 2022. For more information, please email Nathan and Laura at *info@englishcottagevacation.com* or visit *www.englishcottagevacation.com*

## A FESTIVE PRE CHRISTMAS BREAK AT WELL COTTAGE

Cosy nights playing games with your loved ones in-front of the roaring open fire. Fairy lights twinkling and Frank Sinatra playing in the background. Laura in the kitchen creating a beautiful 3 course evening festive meal of Minted Pea Soup, followed by Sous Vide Filet Mignon, Creamy mushroom sauce, roasted seasonal vegetable and truffles roasted potatoes completed with Mince Pies and Fresh Cream or of course whatever you heart so desires. The aromas wafting through to your nostrils filling you with nostalgic happiness as Nathan delivers a mulled wine or Whisky on the rocks from the vast choice of spirits, beers, wines and liqueurs from the Cottage bar.

The perfect pre-Christmas "Christmas", where this year you haven't had to lift a finger! This year you've had the chance to relax and enjoy your time with your family. Be it your partner, children or parents.

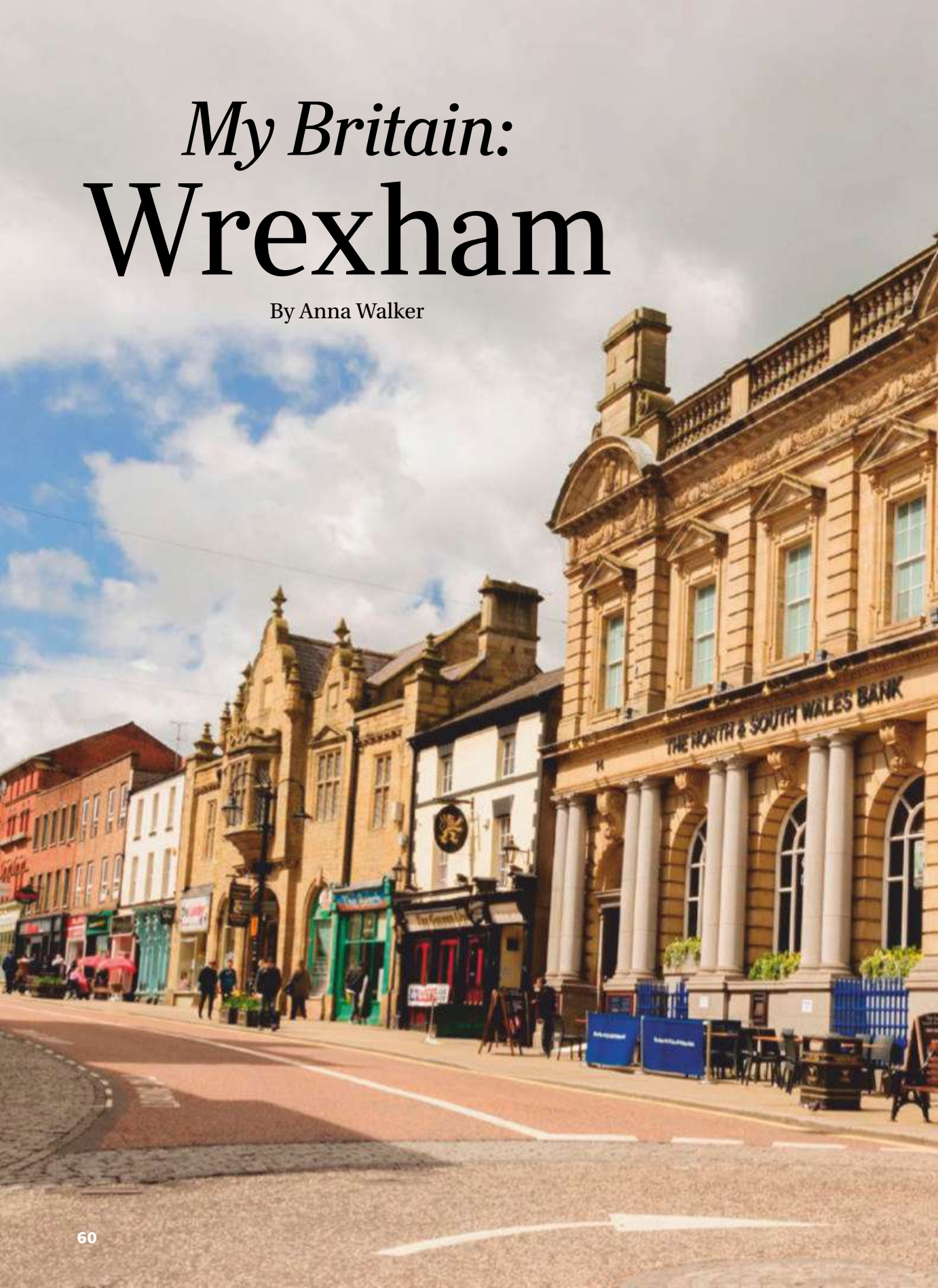
Nathan and Laura have thought of everything so that you don't have to. They have arranged all of your activities and even made sure you travel in style and comfort with refreshments packed for your journey and all the details taken care of. Whether you are doing a spot of Christmas shopping, sight seeing, enjoying family activities with your children or simply taking every opportunity to soak up the festive atmosphere they'll arrange it all.

Perhaps a morning spa treatment in the comfort of your bedroom. Lazy mornings with a buck fizz in hand, dressing gown adorned and family laughs at the cottage breakfast table of eggs benedict, croissants, fresh fruit and many other delights.

This Christmas, indulge you and your loved ones in a Christmas in a home away from home surrounded by love and festive cheer.

# *My Britain:* Wrexham

By Anna Walker



DAVID PIMBOROUGH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The Welsh market town of Wrexham has a rich history of settlement dating back to before the 11th century. At the forefront of the Industrial Revolution in Wales, it was a hub of coal and steel mining as well as a centre for production of iron, leather, and beer. Recently, however, the town has hit headlines for altogether different reasons. Wrexham AFC, one of the oldest professional football teams in the world, was purchased by Hollywood actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney in 2020, in what was surprise news both to the town, and the rest of the world. Reynolds said of the purchase, "We want Wrexham to be a global force."

As well as its now world-famous football team, Wrexham offers visitors a pretty Medieval town centre, Racecourse Ground (the world's oldest international stadium), several bustling indoor markets and the 15th-century St Giles Church, one of the Seven Wonders of Wales described by architect WD Caröe as a "glorious masterpiece".

> "It's a hard-working town filled with passionate, interesting people"
>
> - Actor, Ryan Reynolds

## Joss Roberts

Joss Roberts, 30, works in sales and marketing at Wrexham Lager, and has lived in Wrexham for most of his life. Visit **wrexhamlager.co.uk** for more information on the famous brewery

**I have lived on and off in Wrexham my whole life**. Wrexham is a special community—everyone knows everyone here, and people always go out of their way for each other. It's a working class town and full of stand-out personalities. The spirit is special because overall everyone has the same wish; to see the best for Wrexham.

Wrexham Lager has a long and rich history—the company was established in 1882 and was used on the Titanic. As the years went on, Wrexham Lager's name grew and grew, until a series of mergers and the growing number of acquisitions made by the likes of Carlsberg saw Wrexham Lager overshadowed to the point that commercial production stopped in 2000.

In 2011, however, the company was revived and the lager can now be found and enjoyed in the most pubs it's ever been in, both in Wrexham and beyond.

**Wrexham Lager is a resilient brand** that refuses to give up, even through the hardest of times. Having been closed down for ten years, it could have very easily never made a return. However, through the support of the locals and knowing how much it means to them, Wrexham Lager is now growing quicker than ever. Wrexham Lager wouldn't exist without the support of the locals—it's more than just a lager to our home town, it's got a really special following.

**My favourite spot in Wrexham** is our Wrexham Lager Brewery! There are also many great pubs our town has to offer where you'll always bump into someone for a chat. I also love the Racecourse Ground of course, where Wrexham AFC play— the team has such an historic partnership with Wrexham Lager, which is now only improving through the well-publicised takeover by Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney. Other great spots are Nant Mill for a walk and Llandegla for a bike ride.

Nant Mill Country Park

# Sarah Baker

Sarah Baker, 32, is the owner and manager of Lot 11 cafe and was born and raised in Wrexham. Visit **lot11cafe.co.uk** for more information

**I was born in Wrexham in 1988 and I've grown up here**. I live a stone's throw away from the town centre and even though I have left for university and travels, I've always been pulled back to it.

I love the people and the surroundings here. Wrexham is situated so well on the map, a short drive to the North Wales coast and so close to big cities like Liverpool and Manchester. I love that the town is always busy, especially now with students and the buzz from the Wrexham AFC takeover. There's a lot of people around the town trying to make it a better place—so many people investing their time and money into creating events and attractions. It's great for small businesses like mine in the town centre.

I had always wanted my own hospitality venture from a young age, but was never sure of what I wanted to do. It was when I went travelling to Australia that I found the brunch and coffee scene. I've always been a morning person and I was surprised in Australia by how many people would be up and out meeting for coffee and breakfast before work. I just knew that

Chirk Aqueduct, Erddig Hall and Lot 11

when I come home I would miss it, and there was nowhere to go for avocado and poached eggs in town.

The idea was to create a space where people could meet for great coffee and a catch up, no matter their age. We have always tried to be friendly and make sure people feel at ease as soon as they walk through the door.

"Lot 11" is actually an acronym for "Love Our Town", which I do! We try to support as many independent suppliers as we can, from cake makers to local artworks on the wall. The cafe is covered in tailormade wallpaper featuring pictures of local landmarks, from Erddig Hall to Chirk Aqueduct, the floodlights at Wrexham Stadium and the university.

**Over the years Wrexham** has sometimes been in the headlines for the wrong reasons, but all of a sudden there seems to be a real buzz in town. I've always been proud to say I'm from Wrexham and why wouldn't I be—there are some beautiful spots here. ■

To plan a future visit to Wrexham, head to thisiswrexham.co.uk

## If I Ruled The World

# Steve Hughes

Australian thrash metal musician and comedian Steve Hughes shares the rules he'd put in place should he find himself king of the world...

**I'd end the five-day working week.** We begin this "five days on, two days off" structure in our school days and it's a kind of mind-control brainwashing to get you into set belief systems. I'd also change the idea of education as rote memorisation and throwing everyone into studying the same subjects. I found school boring, so I couldn't do any of it. I couldn't do maths or science because my left brain is a grape compared to my right. I was interested in making albums, comedy or drawing pictures, but I realised that school is really just getting you ready to work in an office for the next 40 years.

**All centralised and international banking would be shut down,** and those involved would be charged with crimes against the multiverse. I mean, I'd only try them for things like you know, wars, genocide, drug trafficking, human trafficking, the destruction of nations, cultures and the environment... stuff like that [he laughs]. Banking systems are

one of the cruxes of our entire global problems.

**I'd be putting governments on trial along with the banks.** I wasn't in England in the 1980s but it seems to me that people were very upset when Margaret Thatcher started selling things off—like, well, your entire country's ability to sustain itself. What do people think globalisation is? This is IT folks, this is the Holy Roman Empire. If you don't now make anything in your country, then you're just a service-based economy and you're at the mercy of the outsiders who now control your steel, coal, farming, medical and transportation industries.

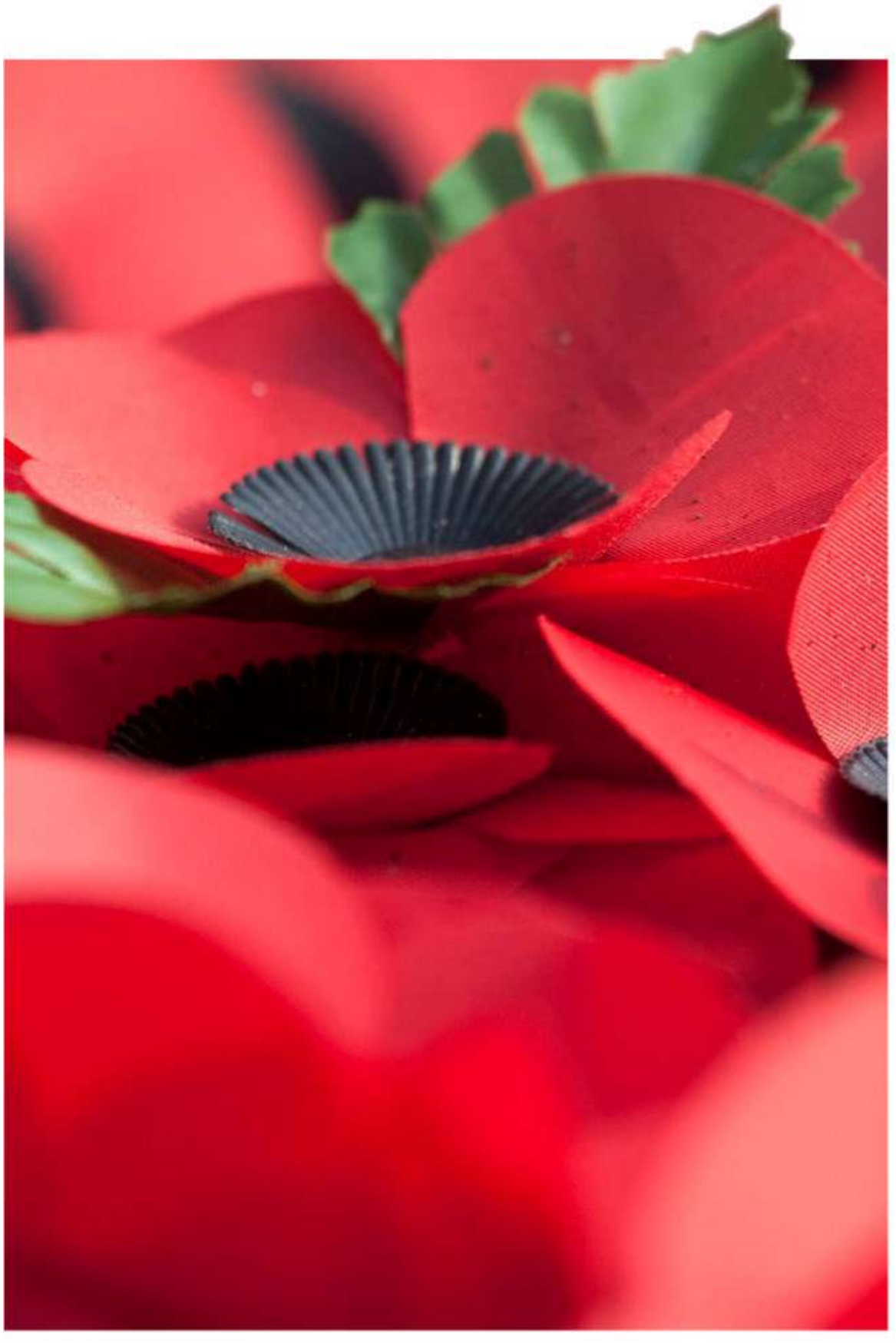
**Everybody would investigate what a birth certificate is.** They tell you that a birth certificate is just registering a child, for documentation or record of population. But what is basically happening is that when you register a child, you're being registered under the International Stock Exchange.

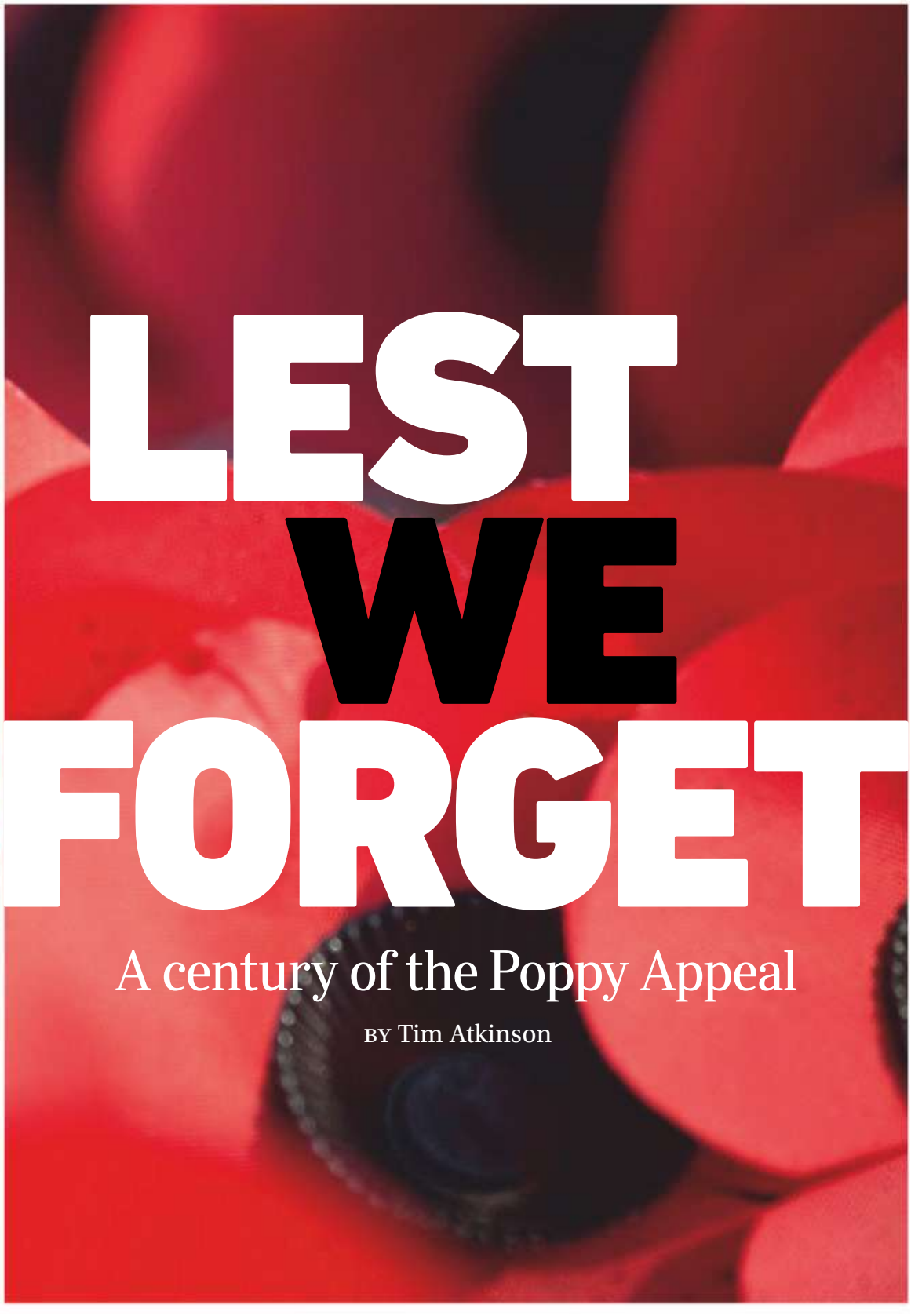
**Medicine would revert back to the knowledge and wisdom of nature and spiritual healing.** [Our current practices] are not spiritually deep enough. One day we might go back and look at all those operations where we cut everybody open and realise that we're actually destroying spiritual centres within bodies. We'll realise that you can't just hack it all up and fill it up with scar tissue and expect it to function the same. I follow Chinese medicine a lot and there, treating the physical manifestation of the illnesses is the last port of call—it's already been coming through the emotional body, the intellectual body, probably even through karma.

**We'd question "overpopulation".** Where does this stuff come from? Who said there's too many people in the world? I can't picture that in our spiritual magnificence, that the evolutionary creative souls that we are, somehow manifested on a planet [that cannot cope with us]. But someone from the UN said that the universe got it wrong. And then he nipped down with an agenda that he got from these b*****ds and gave it to the media.

**We'd start new governments, but** they wouldn't be called governments, because "government" basically means "mind control". We'd be deconstructing down to smaller community-based leaderships until we become so evolved that no one needs to tell anybody anything. Why? Because we all understand how to live. ■

Steve Hughes' new show *Are You Serious?* tours the UK until November 29. Visit stevehughes.net for tickets





# LEST WE FORGET

## A century of the Poppy Appeal

BY Tim Atkinson

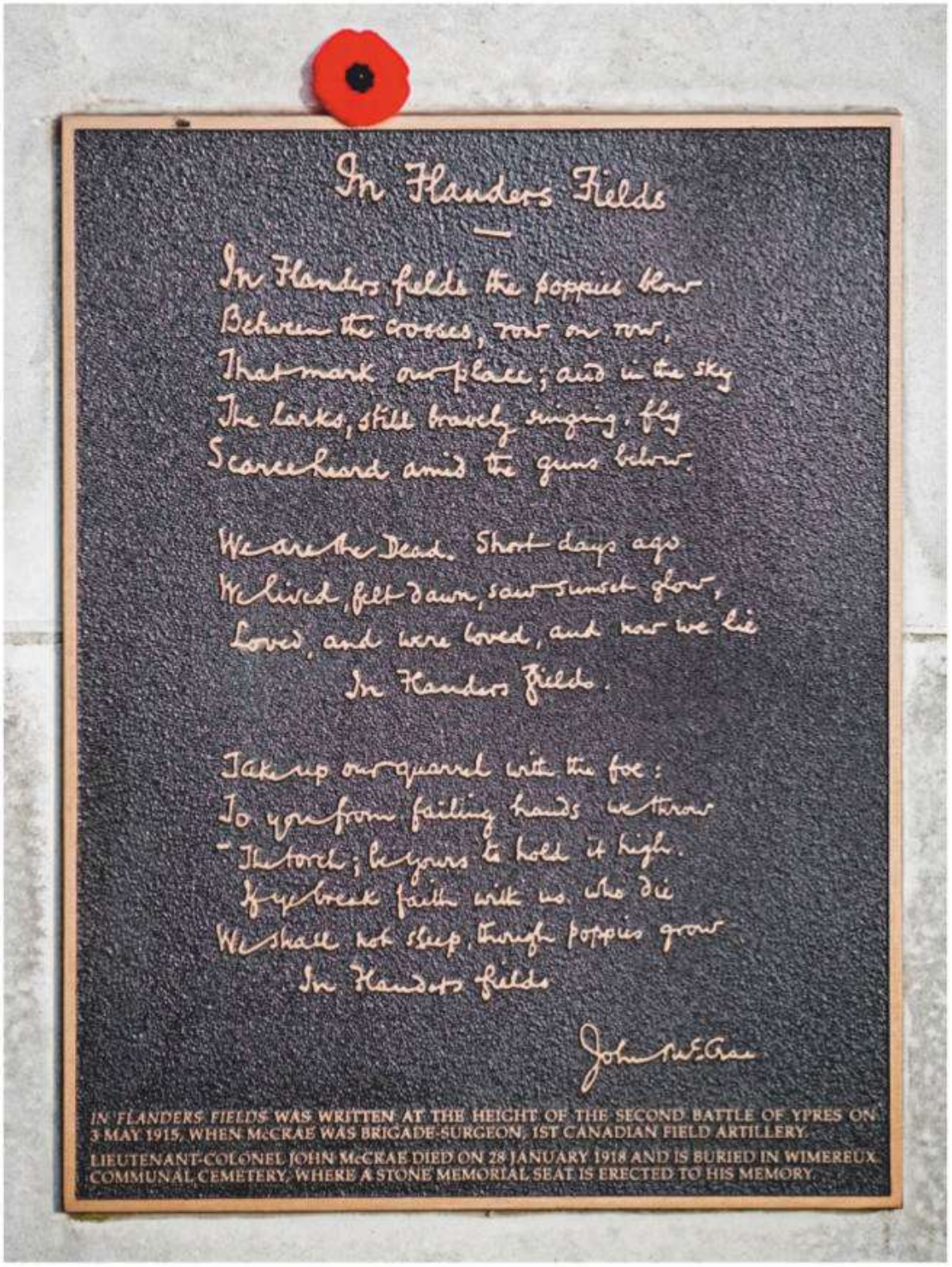
Not even the worldwide coronavirus pandemic could stop the Poppy Appeal, although last year the Royal British Legion was forced to abandon traditional door-to-door sales and spend £70,000 on hand sanitiser. Thankfully this November 11 (or the Sunday nearest) Remembrance ceremonies will again take place to commemorate the dead of the two world wars and many subsequent conflicts. And what's more, this year will mark the centenary of the sale of red paper poppies.

The choice of the red poppy symbol owes its origins to a poem written in 1915 by Canadian army surgeon John McCrae. “In Flanders Fields” was written while McCrae was serving behind the lines near Ypres. Sitting in the back of a medical field ambulance near an advance dressing post at Essex Farm, he was inspired by the proliferation of poppies growing both on the battlefields and in the military cemeteries. Poppies thrive in disturbed soil, and there was plenty of that on the Western Front. It wasn't the first time the link between war and *Papaver rhoeas* (as the scarlet corn poppy is officially known) had been noticed, either. The fields of Waterloo had been strewn with the same crimson flowers a century before and as early as 1694, Lord Perth was writing of the poppies that appeared after the battle of Landen, “as if last year’s blood has taken root and has appeared as this year in flowers.”

Nevertheless, the first wreaths laid at the Cenotaph in 1919 were made not of poppies, but a variety of blooms including the Bleuet de France cornflowers, still the symbol of remembrance across the Channel. It was not until 1921, when the first Royal British Legion poppy appeal took place, that the red paper poppy now ubiquitous as the symbol of remembrance in the UK and Commonwealth was widely sold or worn. And the story of how this small, versatile and resilient weed became such a powerful icon of war and sacrifice is a complicated one, involving not only McCrae's poem but the campaigning efforts of two remarkable women.

**Moina Michael, an American teacher working** for the YMCA Overseas War Secretaries organisation, was inspired after reading McCrae's poem to suggest disabled ex-servicemen might make simple paper poppies as a means of raising much-needed funds for veterans. Anna Guérin, meanwhile, a wealthy French widow, decided to sponsor the manufacture of silken red poppies in the devastated areas of France, which were then sold to raise money for war widows and orphans.

It was Guérin who, in 1921,


In Flanders Fields
In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.
John McCrae
IN FLANDERS FIELDS WAS WRITTEN AT THE HEIGHT OF THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES ON 3 MAY 1915, WHEN McCRAE WAS BRIGADE-SURGEON, 1ST CANADIAN FIELD ARTILLERY.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHN McCRAE DIED ON 28 JANUARY 1918 AND IS BURIED IN WIMEREUX COMMUNAL CEMETERY, WHERE A STONE MEMORIAL SEAT IS ERECTED TO HIS MEMORY.

JUERGEN SCHWARZ / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

**A memorial featuring verses from the poem "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae at Essex Farm Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium**

persuaded Earl Haig, founder of the British Legion, to adopt the poppy as a symbol of remembrance and sacrifice. But Haig and the newly-established Legion liked Moina Michael's idea of using disabled servicemen themselves to make the simple paper poppies. It was an idea that, a year later, led to the birth of the Poppy Factory.

**In 1922, war veteran Major George Howson** wrote: "I have been given a cheque for £2,000 to make poppies with. It is a large responsibility and will be very difficult. If the experiment is successful it will be the start of an industry to employ 150 men. I do not think it can be a great success, but it is worth doing."

Thankfully his pessimism was short-lived. By 1925, Howson was buying land in Richmond, Surrey, on which to build a new factory, the original having outgrown its premises on the Old Kent Road. A century later the factory is still there, beside the Thames, producing over 5 million poppies a year, in addition to 130,000 poppy wreaths and a million remembrance crosses annually.

From the outset, the factory's aim was to employ ex-servicemen, many of whom were desperate for work after the war. Initially that meant just five men, but the number soon grew to 40 and by the time the factory relocated to Richmond, the workforce numbered more than 300 veterans. The new premises allowed for expansion, and also had space to build veterans' accommodation, as well as space for rest and recreation. This broadening of charity's scope gradually expanded to the extent that today's Poppy Factory supports veterans all over the country—and not just making poppies.

**Douglas Haig, First Earl Haig and founder of the British Legion**

PETER BARRITT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The "Getting You Back to Work" campaign was launched in 2010 with a target of supporting 500 ex-Service

**A handmade Remembrance poppy by American woman Moina Belle Michael, in an attempt to raise funds for veterans of the First World War**

LEE KAREN STOW / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

men and women with health conditions into sustainable work by 2016. By the summer of 2015, this ambitious milestone had already been reached, confirming once again the success of The Poppy Factory's life-changing work.

Derek Johnson-Brown spent six years with the Royal Corps of Signals both in the UK and Germany. A serious motorcycle accident in 2017 resulted in him almost losing a leg.

"I had already been diagnosed with Fibromyalgia four years earlier," he tells me, "and initially I found it hard to accept that I had a disability and could not do things I had taken for granted before." Derek had more than a dozen different operations over a period of three years before feeling

ready to consider returning to some form of employment. It was then that the Poppy Factory stepped in.

"They helped me to see beyond my disability and what I couldn't do, focusing instead on what I could. They helped me to apply for roles using transferable skills I'd learned from both military and civilian jobs. I would still be moping around feeling useless if they had not given me a sense of worth and a direction."

Derek is now an employment coach himself, working for the Department of Work and Pensions.

**THE POPPY APPEAL HELPED ME SEE BEYOND MY DISABILITY AND FOCUS ON WHAT I *COULD* DO**

"I have sign posted every military veteran with a health condition that crosses my path to the Poppy Factory," he says proudly. "The poppy symbol and the Poppy Factory means a great deal to the veteran community."

**But what of the wider community?**

There have been increasing concerns in recent years about the pressure to conform, especially among those in the public eye. Newsreader Jon Snow coined the term "poppy fascism" to describe what he regards as the unreasonable demand to wear the flower in his lapel while on TV.

"I respect our armed forces, the sacrifice and the loss, and like others I remember them on Remembrance Sunday," Snow wrote in a blog post on the Channel 4 news website, where he admits to wearing a poppy in private. "But I am not going to wear it or any other symbol on air."

Some claim the poppy makes a political statement. The England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland football associations were each fined for allowing their respective teams to wear the poppy during the 2018 World Cup Qualifying fixtures, defying FIFA rules on the display of "political or religious symbols". Others, including some veterans, object that the red poppy glorifies war. In 2014, a group of ex-servicemen called Veterans For Peace held an alternative remembrance ceremony at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, laying a wreath of white poppies and wearing T-shirts quoting Harry Patch, the last survivor of the First World War, "War is Organised Murder".

But for Don Jenkins, who served for 30 years in the Royal Corps of Signals, wearing the poppy "is an outward expression of my thanks to those who made the ultimate sacrifice or who were injured or disabled. I also realise," he tells me, "that the money will go to those who have served and who have either fallen on hard times or need some kind of assistance." And for Ian King,

**FIFA has banned players in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from wearing poppies on their kits**

ALAN SMITH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

who recently retired after a 20-year career in the Royal Navy, "Remembrance is one of those things that ties the military to the people… It is an identification with those who have gone before, a wished for association with them and a recognition that we have not given the ultimate sacrifice that they have. We are grateful for their service."

That gratitude, according to McCrae, brings with it the responsibility to "take up the battle" ourselves. McCrae's poem is as much about looking forward as it is about remembrance. As a poet, McCrae memorialised the dead; but as an army surgeon his work was about caring for the living. The torch that is passed to us is as much about our duty of care to the survivors of war as it is about the very necessary duty of remembrance. And annual sales of the red paper poppy give us all the opportunity to do our duty, every year, to help ensure that the victims and veterans of war are not forgotten. ■

Tim Atkinson's novel, *The Glorious Dead*, about the postwar battlefield clearances and burials, is available now, published by Unbound

# HOW TO AVOID DIGITAL IMMORTALITY

## Now is the time to organise your online life

BY *Paul Robert*

# "DO YOU HAVE HER PASSWORD FOR FACEBOOK?"

My sister, Louise, looked across the table from behind our mother's iPad, while I leafed through a tiny notebook full of scribbled telephone numbers, addresses, and an occasional user ID and password. "Nope," I said. "Nothing here."

Only the day before, our nonagenarian mother, Miep, had passed away peacefully. Louise and I, still numb, found ourselves in her apartment in Purmerend, near Amsterdam, going through the next steps—cards, funeral arrangements—and trying to erase what made up her digital footprint.

She didn't have a huge online presence; insecure about the digital world, Mum had really only played Wordfeud with us, read the news, checked local shops for their weekly offers, and sent e-mails to her friends and family. She had a Facebook account only to keep up on family news. Her few online activities were recorded in the tiny notebook that my late father had started 20 years ago. But Mum didn't really grasp the difference between a URL, a user ID, and a password, and the booklet was as enlightening as a collection of hieroglyphs.

We ended up logging into Facebook from my laptop, using Mum's user ID and clicking "forgotten password?" This allowed us to then reset the password through her e-mail account, log in to Facebook, and go through the several steps ("are you sure?" "are you really sure?" "are you really, really sure?") to permanently delete her account.

It was an important lesson to my sister and me. "When I get home, I'm going to make a list of all my accounts," said Louise. "If something should happen to me, my daughter wouldn't be able to find them."

**A couple of weeks later** I decided to streamline my own list of passwords, which I keep organised in an online vault accessed through an app on my phone that requires just one master password.

Though I have never had social

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION, PREVIOUS SPREAD BY MARILEE LAMARQUE. ALL PHOTOS ©GETTY IMAGES

media accounts, I had 140 online IDs—for retailers, the gym, web-hosting services, e-mail accounts, my bank, insurance companies, credit cards, and more. Even though they're all in one place, if my wife, who knows my master password, ever has to sort through the "vault" it would be a herculean task. Yet I am the exception to the rule: most people have not organised their digital access information.

"It is sad, but hardly anyone thinks about taking care of their digital footprint," says Wil-Jan Dona, 75, a retired telecom project manager who now volunteers for a Dutch organisation called SeniorWeb, where he gives seminars on this subject. "Many older people have at least a Facebook and a WhatsApp account, but when I ask them what they do with their passwords, most often they reply: 'I don't know, my grandchild set it up.'"

It's not an issue only for the elderly, says Dona. "I had a middle-aged friend who owned a small business. I'll call him John. He had ongoing projects with clients when he was diagnosed with cancer. It was aggressive and he died soon after." After the funeral one of John's clients called his wife. "They were very understanding," says Dona, "but there were files on John's laptop that they urgently needed. His wife didn't have access. Then other clients started calling."

In despair, she turned to Dona, who managed to unlock the laptop. "It ended well, but it caused her a lot of stress on top of the grief," he says. "And then we still needed to handle his personal accounts."

On the laptop these were easy to close and remove, but his iPhone, which was full of photos that his widow wanted to retrieve, presented an even bigger technical problem: Apple phones in particular are all but impossible to access if you don't have the password or the owner's thumbprint.

"Only the police have the software tools to access some of these phones, and they were willing to help," says Dona. But that's not something you can count on.

**THE MORE ACTIVE WE ARE ONLINE, THE MORE THERE IS AT STAKE. THOSE WHO DON'T PREPARE MAY BECOME VIRTUAL "GHOSTS."**

**The more active you are online,** the more there is at stake. How about the photos you uploaded to Flickr? What if you leave behind years' worth of

## STEPS TO TAKE NOW

There was a time when the treasure chest of memories left to us by our ancestors was simply a shoebox filled with faded photos, postcards, and letters. But what we leave online can be used by anyone when we are gone, until authorities figure out a way to extend privacy legislation to our digital afterlife.

The worst-case scenario is that your photos (including photos of yourself) may end up in commercial or political messages, or your identity used for fraudulent e-mails. At the least, your friends and loved ones will continue to be confronted with things like unexpected birthday reminders and "friend" suggestions. Here's how you can mitigate that:

### 1. Appoint a digital executor

Give a trusted friend or relative access to your accounts and instructions for what you want done with them. Facebook, for instance, offers the option to register a "legacy contact," a trusted person who can manage your account when you are gone. Otherwise, the only way to delete these accounts may be by submitting to the company a death certificate and proof of identity, and demonstrating you have the authority to act on the account holder's behalf. An increasing number of funeral homes and online start-ups offer services in this field, ranging from deleting accounts to the preservation of a digital "shoebox" with photos,

activities, comments, and tweets on social media? They will not disappear with you, and if you don't prepare—by making your passwords available to your loved ones so that they can close your account when you pass away—those posts will remain public.

Many of us will eventually become digitally immortal, virtual ghosts. Only when your loved ones close your accounts will your old posts be deleted.

"You have to decide what you want to do with your digital footprint. It is no different from making sure that the right thing happens with your money," says Dona.

Even that is nobody's favourite activity: many Europeans do not even have a registered will and testament. Because these are not centrally registered, figures are scarce, but in Germany, for instance, a 2018 survey by Deutsche Bank estimated that less than 40 per cent of adults have a last will. That means that most people leave decisions about their

tweets, and other such memorabilia.

## 2. Keep a list

If you don't have too many online accounts, make a list of your IDs and passwords and tell your executor, and your loved ones, where to find it. "That is the simplest way to help those who stay behind," says Dona. "Make a clear list and write it down in a notebook. Don't leave all your passwords on your computer."

But if you are like me, and your work, your hobbies, your finances, and your contacts with friends are all online and your accounts run into the dozens, you may consider an online password manager like **1Password**, **Keeper**, or **OneLogin**. They generate complicated passwords for each account you have and store them in an encrypted online vault accessible only to you. All you need to remember (and share with your virtual executor) is one master password for the app that is installed on your devices.

## 3. Prevent identity theft

It's worth emphasising: to protect yourself against identity theft, don't use simple passwords.

"You have no idea how many people still use passwords like 12345," says Dona, who suggests that if you don't want complicated passwords, use sentences. "Hackers can easily break simple passwords, but they haven't figured out how to hack a sentence." He adds with a smile, "I've used 'Ireallydislikemymother inlaw' as a password." This is made even safer by adding a number. "But use a different one for each account, and be sure to update them at least once per year."

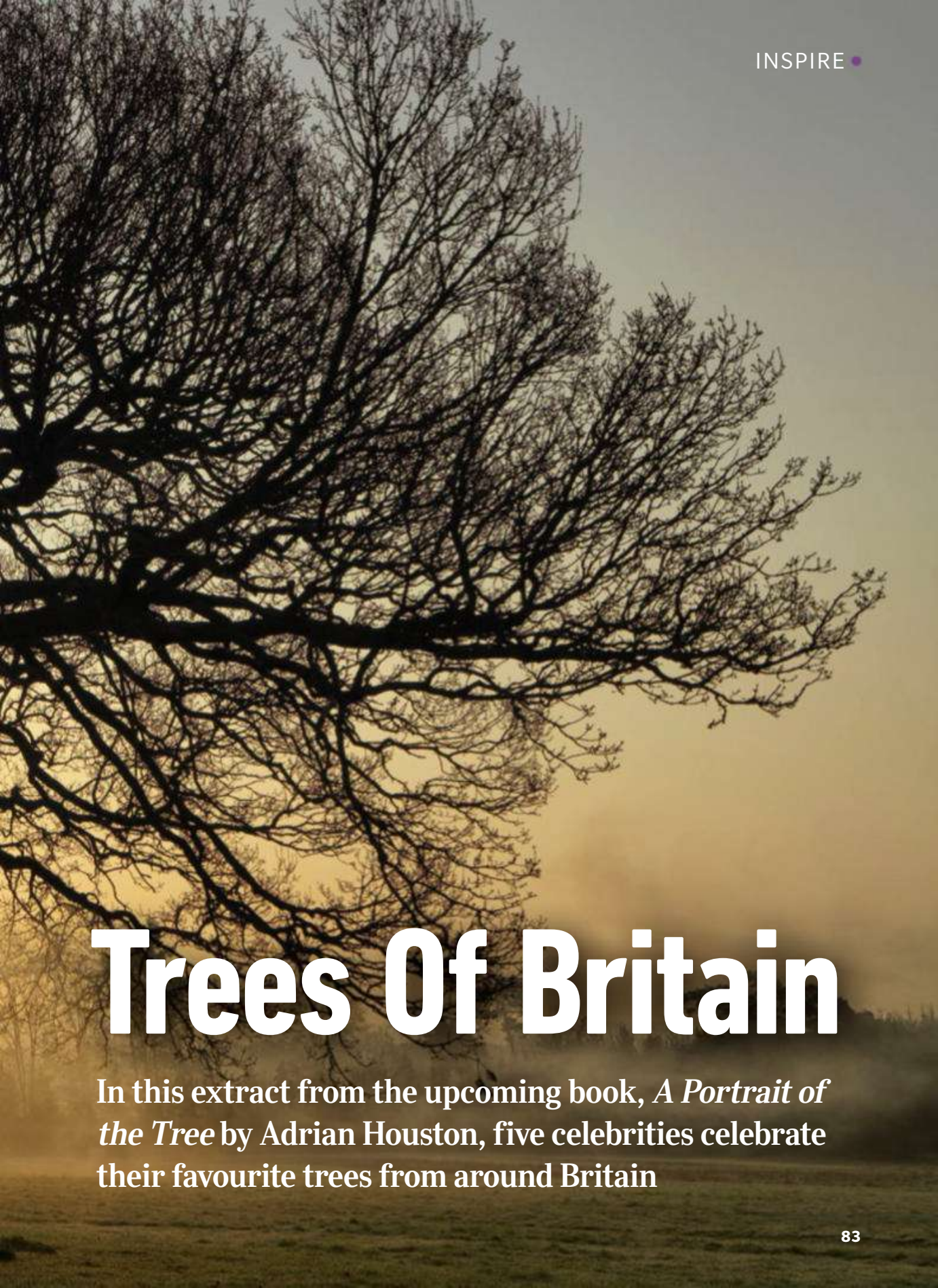
heritage to local legislation.

Our digital footprint is even further from our minds, and there is no EU-wide legislation in this field to help our heirs (in fact, the United States is one of the few countries to have introduced a law to exclusively address the handling of digital legacies). But technological developments force us to think about what will happen to "us" if we don't take steps to choose for ourselves. It's now possible to bring loved ones "back to life" with apps that animate photos. In years to come, who knows what it will be possible to do with our images and our voices? I know that I wouldn't want my virtual persona to survive.

**Two days before she died**, Mum wisely told my daughter: "Don't worry. It will be hard for you for a while, but after that there'll just be happy memories."

That's all I need and all I hope to leave behind: a photograph and the happy memories. ■

*This magnificent oak tree sits in the middle of our field not far from river Thames. We walk by it and admire it most days with our children and dogs. Spring, summer, autumn and winter, rain or shine without fail we visit and reflect on its history and beauty*
**Max Gottschalk**



# Trees Of Britain

**In this extract from the upcoming book, *A Portrait of the Tree* by Adrian Houston, five celebrities celebrate their favourite trees from around Britain**

## Alan Titchmarsh, MBE

If you go to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, you will be able to submerge yourself into the world of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. There are superb summer bedding schemes, great views down the sloping landscape towards the Solent and the Swiss Cottage with a kitchen garden where Prince Albert encouraged his children to grow fruits and vegetables. There are also hundreds of stately trees, many of them planted by kings, queens, princes and princesses during the time that Queen Victoria lived there. She died in the house in 1901, and shortly afterwards it was opened to the public, courtesy of King Edward VII.

If you walk down the steps to the broad terrace in front of the house and turn to your right, passing underneath a wooden pergola, you will find in the centre of a flowerbed a towering specimen of the Chusan palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei*. It was planted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate the centenary of the garden being opened to the public. The Queen had an assistant in the operation. Me. Well, to be honest, and without impugning Her Majesty's horticultural prowess, I did the lion's share of the work as she looked on.

Quite right, too. The tree was around six feet when we planted it 20 years ago. Now it must be 20-odd feet tall. Every time I see it, I feel a sense of pride, and have a memory of a wonderful day on an island where I now have a home and spend at least a third of the year. It is a magical place, and our tree—Her Majesty's and mine—is really rather special.

STEVEN MAY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

## Alice Temperley, MBE

This beautiful sycamore tree sits nobly on top of Burrow Hill at our family's cider farm and can be seen from miles around. It's the most breathtakingly magical spot I know and sits directly on three mystical ley lines. It has 360-degree views of the Somerset countryside, the cider farm and all the orchards it rules over, the Somerset levels, Glastonbury Tor, Ham Hill and the Blackdown Hills.

My siblings and I will always be deeply connected to this place which was a gift upon marriage from our father to our mother. We drink cider under the tree in the summer, toboggan from it in the winter and egg roll during Easter. It's where I always go to think and be at peace.

STILLS PRESS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

## Antony Gormley, OBE

This tree lies on the skyline at the border of our land. When you arrive here you see it immediately to the south as you come out of the woods and cross the cattle grid and the start of pasture.

AMER GHAZZAL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

This sycamore expresses a searching vitality that spreads wide against the sky. We built the look-out tower next to it and can now enjoy looking at it from ground to canopy. The stark geometry of the tower makes its striving branches all the more vigorous.

One of our artist friends climbed this tree and standing on a horizontal lower branch called out to ask a crowd gathered around its base, "Who will join me and speak the language of the spirits?"

## Joanna Lumley, OBE

Was it from seeing them when I first came to London, aged eight, and noticed their dappled bark and sweeping branches? Was it when I saw how they spread down their arms to the river, and how their leaves crackle like cornflakes underfoot when they fall? I cannot remember a time when I didn't feel in awe of the mighty London plane tree; in parks and along the streets, in palace gardens and on recreation grounds, they tower up to the skies and suck up bad fumes and take care of squirrels and birds. They are giants protecting us while we sleep and shading us when we wake. They roar in storms and make us sneeze in springtime.

Their distant Asian cousin, the chinar, stood over me when I drew my first breath in Kashmir. I hope there will be one nearby when I breathe my last.

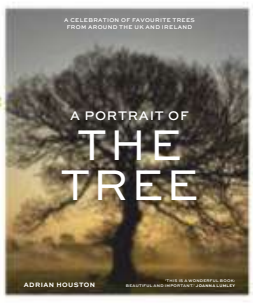
GUY BELL / BETTINA STRENSKE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

## Raymond Blanc, OBE

This magnificent tree is part of the proud history and landscape of Le Manoir. The greatest memory I have of it is when the Queen Mother and her entourage of knights and ladies-in-waiting drank champagne and Dubonnet in the shadows of this glorious tree.

Sadly this tree is diseased and is no longer with us; Adrian Houston through his art has captured its beauty and grandeur so perfectly for us all to remember it.

***A Portrait of a Tree*** **by Adrian Houston (£30, Greenfinch) is available now**



# CAPE TOWN REVIVAL

BY *Nicholas DeRenzo*
FROM ***HEMISPHERES*** MAGAZINE
FOR UNITED AIRLINES

*A generation after the end of apartheid, the city is buzzing with a new creative energy*

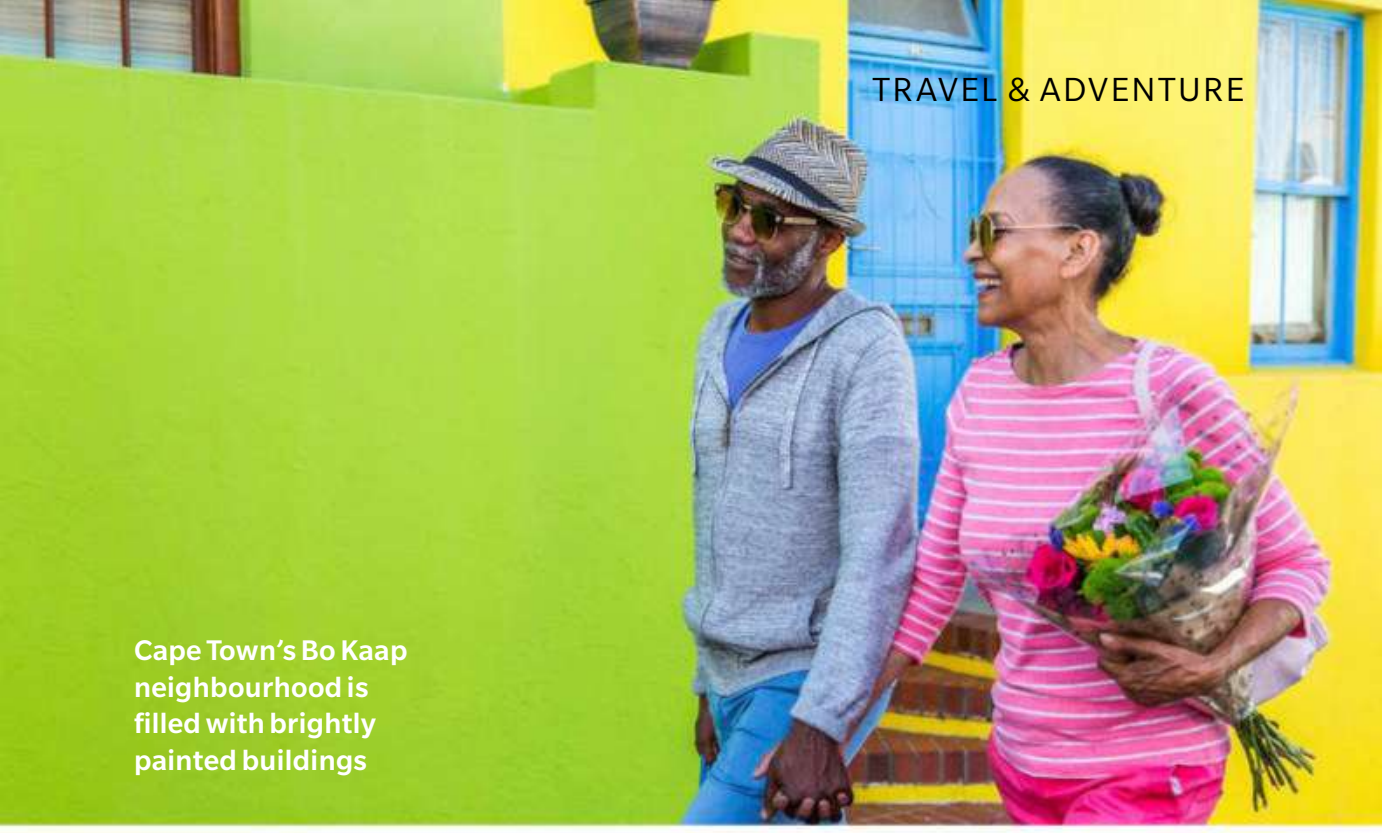
PERCHED ON THE southwesternmost edge of the continent, Cape Town can feel like the tip of the African iceberg—and many visitors don't realise how much depth lies beneath the surface. They sunbathe on its beaches, cage-dive with its great white sharks, sip its wine—but do they ever truly engage with its people?

A quarter of a century after the end of apartheid, a new generation of creative Capetonians demands to be seen and heard for the first time. Formerly ignored cuisines from the area's Xhosa people and Muslim-majority Cape Malay community are coming to the fore; African contemporary art has finally got a museum that feels as vital as Paris's famed Centre Pompidou; and even the townships are embracing their status as entrepreneurial hubs.

TO SQUEEZE IN as much of the region's dramatic scenery as possible, I begin my visit with a half-day tour with Cape Sidecar Adventures, which offers rides on a fleet of 1950s and 60s motorcycle sidecars.

Owner Tim Clarke outfits me in a leather jacket, helmet, goggles, and gloves, and introduces me to the company's "marketing manager": a rescue mutt named Brody who wears "doggles." Brody and I hop into the tandem sidecar. I'm not a dog person, but it's can't-fight-this-feeling-anymore cute when he rests his head on my shoulder throughout the drive.

In the fishing village of Hout Bay,



Cape Town's Bo Kaap neighbourhood is filled with brightly painted buildings

PHOTO: ©ALISTAIR BERG/GETTY IMAGES

we wait for the coastal fog to lift. Inside Bay Harbour Market I drink a red latte, made with *rooibos* "tea"—actually a scrubby bush that grows in the Western Cape—then snack on *biltong* (dried, cured meat) and *droëwors* (dried sausage).

On our way out of town, Brody gets into a barking match with a fur seal on the dock. People grin and flail their arms like kids as we pass. I wave back, and Clarke shouts over the motor, pointing at Brody, "They're not smiling at you!"

We zigzag along the scenic paths on the Cape Peninsula—the jutting landmass that ends in the famed Cape of Good Hope, the continent's southwesternmost point. I keep my eyes peeled for breaching right whales. No such luck.

Our next stop is the penguin colony at Boulders Beach. "We used to take our kids to swim with them," Clarke tells me. Dozens of penguins squawk, waddle, and roll around in the surf. Tourists *ooh* and *aah* at the fluffy chicks and wildly snap photos. It's impossible not to be swept up in the scene.

After the tour, I grab a rideshare to Woodstock, a burgeoning but still scrappy neighbourhood where factories are being converted into galleries and high-end restaurants. At the Old Biscuit Mill, an early 20th-century red-brick factory, I ride in a lift up to The Pot Luck Club, sister restaurant to The Test Kitchen (Africa's only entry on the World's 50 Best Restaurants list) downstairs.

Up here, with outlandish views toward flat-topped Table Mountain, I order a Thai green curry martini,

springbok antelope loin with fermented black beans and vermicelli rice noodles, and deboned lamb ribs with tomatoes infused with pomegranate juice.

I work off that hearty lunch at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, at Table Mountain's eastern foot. South Africa's plants don't get equal billing with its lions and elephants, but this mountain has more botanical diversity than the entire United Kingdom. It is part of the Cape Floral Region, a 2.7 million-acre belt of protected areas.

In the park, I track mongoose, chubby guinea fowl, and partridge-like Cape francolins, and then climb onto a wooden platform that snakes over the canopy. Back on the ground, I marvel at the proteas, flowering plants that look like Seussian artichokes (and that gave their name to the national cricket team).

THE NEXT MORNING I set out to do a deep dive into the city's townships, formerly segregated neighbourhoods that are a lasting reminder of the apartheid era. Some 60 per cent of Capetonians make their homes in townships or other informal settlements. Despite a reputation for crime, these areas are the true hotbeds of creativity. In the Gardens area of downtown, I meet tour guide Keith Sparks. As we drive east, he recalls township tours of the past. "I used to see these buses pull up on the highway, and people would jump out and take photos at the fence. It was almost like a zoo experience." This tour, the "City Futures" itinerary, on the other hand, is based on the idea that the city's entrepreneurial future lies here.

In Langa, the region's oldest township, British-Jamaican Tony Elvin—who moved here to open a social-enterprise restaurant for celebrity chef Jamie Oliver and decided to stay—welcomes us to his arts hub and business incubator, iKhaya le Langa NPC. It supports some 106 enterprises, from artists to jewellers to hot-sauce makers.

Elvin leads me into the complex's Sun Diner. "They say don't go to the townships, but Langa is a gateway into another Cape Town that's bubbling up. We're calling Langa the new city centre—the Afrocentric heart of the city."

Sparks and I head back to the highway, toward Khayelitsha, which he compares to Johannesburg's city-size township, Soweto. We drive past people *braaiing* (barbecuing) fragrant meats outside colourful corrugated-tin houses and pull into a school parking lot to meet gardener Athi Ndulula of iKhaya Kulture Garden.

"iKhaya means home, so I want you

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**(Left) Murals brighten up the revitalised neighbourhood of Woodstock; (Above) Table Mountain looms over Cape Town. Sadly, some 500 hectares of land burned in a wildfire there earlier this year; (Opposite page) the penguins at Bounders Beach put on quite a show for the visitors**

to feel at home," Ndulula says as he ushers us past living walls and soil-filled tyres. "We wanted to show the youth what they can do with minimal space." We sample crisp dune spinach, *naartjie* (a citrus fruit), and *spekboom* (a lemony succulent).

Before I leave, Ndulula tells me to check out his side job: he's an aspiring rapper who goes by the name Artist-X. "The 'X' is for my mother tongue, Xhosa," he says.

All that nibbling has stoked my appetite, so I thank Sparks and depart for chef Abigail Mbalo-Mokoena's place in Khayelitsha: 4Roomed The Restaurant. A former dental technician, Mbalo-Mokoena greets me warmly, dressed in a T-shirt that says, "Africa Your Time is Now." In 2019 and 2020, *Food & Wine* and *Travel + Leisure* magazines jointly named 4Roomed one of the world's 30 best restaurants.

"We love heavy spice," she says, as she serves Xhosa-inspired dishes: *isonka samanzi* (steamed bread), sous vide beef, and *samp* (mashed corn kernels) and beans, reportedly Nelson Mandela's favourite food. Her version, made with hominy, tarragon, and

coconut cream, tastes so good that I wish I had a Xhosa grandma to cook it for me.

"My dental profession was a ticket out of the 'hood,' but people leaving was depriving the area of Black professionals," Mbalo-Mokoena says. "I needed a purpose, and my purpose was to move back to the townships—to use food to bring people together."

I take a car to the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town's answer to San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf. At the Watershed market I stock up on souvenirs: sleek ostrich-eggshell jewellery and animal figurines carved from upcycled flip-flops found on the beach.

Nearby, I stop at the experimental Cause Effect Cocktail Kitchen and Cape Brandy Bar, where bar manager Justin Shaw pours me a South African brandy. Cognac-smooth, it was born of necessity: apartheid-era sanctions limited booze from abroad, so South Africans crafted their own spirits. "It's our duty to retell the story of brandy in a non-pretentious way," Shaw says.

Baskets of botanicals that guests can use for custom infusions hang over the bar. "Fynbos has been a part of the food culture here from before the Ice Age," Shaw says, referring to the scrubby, hardy vegetation that grows in these parts. I have a hot, spiced negroni, made with fynbos-infused gin and vermouth.

IN THE MORNING I head to the Waterfront's Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA),

**(Right) The Zeitz Museum is a showcase for African art; (Opposite page) a growing entrepreneurial spirit is creating a brighter future in the townships, including for these kids in Hout Bay; the Dutch colonial architecture of Babylonstoren**

which opened in 2017 in a converted 1921 grain silo. Walls carved out of 42 concrete cylinders create an atrium that is run through with curves, ovals, and parabolas.

Tour guide Siseko Maweyi points up to a vast wall-hanging by Ghana's El Anatsui. What looks like a luxurious textile is made from scraps of copper wire and smashed bottle caps. "It confronts notions of consumerism and waste," Maweyi says.

I pick up a rental car and drive south for lunch at La Colombe, a fine-dining restaurant at the Silvermist Organic Wine Estate, in the suburb of Constantia. One bite in the meal I'll remember for years: a foie gras mousse with springbok tartare on a paper-thin wafer. Is any other country, I wonder, so comfortable eating its national mascot?

My final stop is a peaceful retreat called Babylonstoren, near the Franschhoek Valley. Born in the 1600s as a Cape Dutch farm, the estate takes its name from a pyramidal hill that reminded settlers of the Tower of Babel—an apt allusion, given that this country has 11 official languages.

I drive through miles of vineyard, braking hard once or twice to let baboons cross the road, and pull into the 500-acre wonderland, drop my bags off at my cottage and head out to explore the orchards, olive groves, and a veritable zoo's worth of turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, and donkeys that run to the fence for behind-the-ear scratches.

Before I know it, it's time for dinner. As the staff at the hotel's Bakery Restaurant serves family-style *boerewors* (coriander-spiced sausages), chargrilled *biltong*, and dry-aged cuts cooked over hot coals, a duo plays Afrikaner folk music on guitar and accordion. The wine is flowing. Waiters and waitresses begin grabbing guests and twirling them around between the tables. It feels as if I've stumbled into a 19th-century Boer harvest festival.

On the walk back to my cottage, I'm literally starstruck by how dazzling the constellations and the Milky Way are out here, miles from the city lights. I have to admit there's something immensely special and satisfying about being welcomed into the South African family—if only for a while. ■

Note: 4Roomed is no longer a sit-down restaurant—it now offers meals across the city with its food truck

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PHOTOS: (MUSEUM) COURTESY OF ZEITZ MOCAA; (BABYLONSTOREN) ©GETTY IMAGES; (BOYS) ©DEVON STRONG/GETTY

# The Distinct Approach of *Santa's Fun Adventure*

*Who wouldn't love the idea of giving and receiving gifts? It's the best feeling for everyone to receive a present during the holiday season making it more joyful*

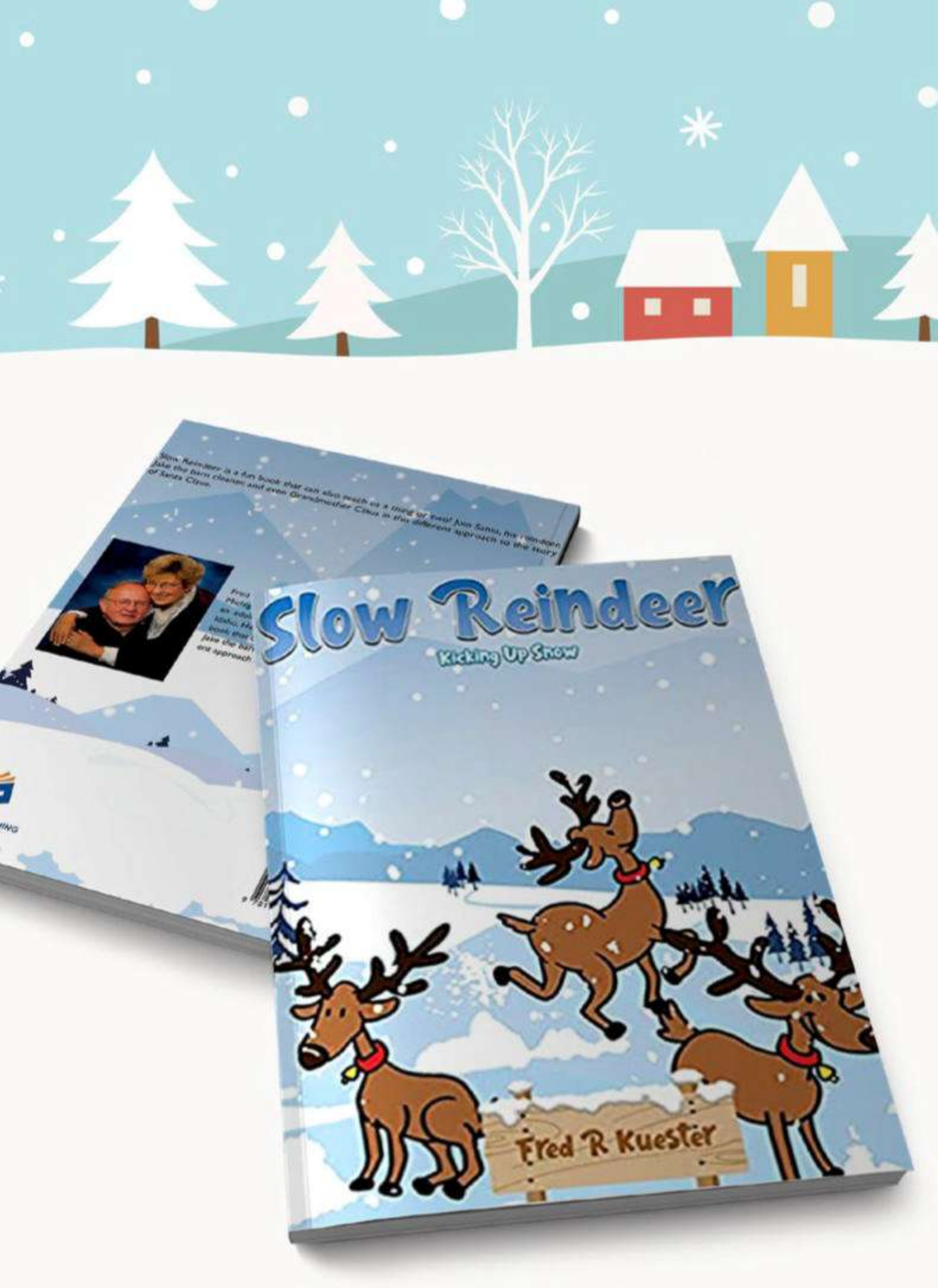
**"Slow Reindeer: Kicking Up Snow"** is a humorous captivating story that will leave readers a good lesson. "Santa Claus," a legendary figure who is the traditional patron of Christmas in the United States and other country has been thrilled and creatively portrayed in this story. This exciting story follows the adventure of Santa, his reindeer, Jake the barn cleaner, and even Grandmother Claus portrays a different approach to the story of Santa Claus.

Fred Kuester the author, vigorously introduces the new stirring version of the holiday story inspired by Santa, the iconic Christmas giver. In our daily living, Santa can be anyone or everyone. One has to possess the virtue of being generous to be associated with the character of a cheerful giver. "So, you better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why Santa Claus is coming to town. (Quoted from song lyrics)

**"Slow Reindeer: Kicking Up Snow"** a holiday story that is inspired by a western Christian culture of bringing gifts on Christmas eve to well-behaved children with the help of his reindeer pull a sleigh through the night sky to help Santa deliver gifts. The story will capture the heart of young readers as well as the young at heart folks. Slow Reindeer: Kicking Up Snow is a good bedtime story for young readers. This book is also a great gift for children.

Available at amazon

*Copies are available on Amazon and other book retailers.*


Slow Reindeer
Kicking Up Snow
Fred R Kuester

*My Great Escape:*

# Ladies In Lausanne

*Londoner Sidonie Chaffer-Melly takes a trip with her friends*

**IN 1816, MARY SHELLEY** composed a gruesome tale of men and monsters while staying on the shores of Lake Geneva. A hundred years later, my best friend was due to go on holiday with her partner to Lausanne, a city nestled on the very same shores in the mountains. Unlike Dr Frankenstein, she was able to escape her monster and broke up with him before the holiday started. Faced with doing the trip alone, there was no other option but for me and our other best friend to book flights and join her.

Lausanne is an elegant city at the foot of the Swiss Alps, gently rolling downhill to the north shore of Lake Geneva. We had a long, sun-drenched weekend to relax, take in the scenery, and eat and drink as much as is necessary when navigating a breakup. With the sun glinting off the lake like a lure, we took books and towels down to the shore to set up for our first day. Laid there in the heat, we could easily have been on a Mediterranean beach, and whenever the temperature got too intense we slipped into the crystal water to cool off. Of course, we were entirely irresponsible sunbathers and all got excruciatingly burned. We

spent the night shivering under the cold tap as we desperately tried to take the sting out of our lobster pink skin.

It's easy to understand why the Romantics sought out scenery like this for inspiration. Sublime snowcapped mountains offer an almost painted backdrop to the flower-filled cobbled streets of hillside towns, where a knock on a wooden window shutter will provide you with samples of local wine and cheese. This is how we spent a leisurely day, now appropriately sun creamed, strolling slowly through lush vineyards and fountain filled villages. I don't know much about wine, but there's something special about sitting under a pergola, enjoying a bottle that was made from grapes grown a stone's throw from the bar.

A holiday is only as good as the people you share it with, and being by the lake with my best friends made everything more beautiful. We spent our last evening gloriously cheese-drunk on a giant fondue, inducing in us a kind of hysteria that resulted in a deliriously grateful tip of about 50 per cent. While it wasn't the romantic holiday that had been planned, there was a romance of another kind, and we were all left with a reminder that the love of good friends will always be there to turn disaster into wine, cheese and laughter. ■

Tell us about your favourite holiday (send a photo too) and if we print it, we'll pay £50. Email excerpts@readersdigest.co.uk

# ONIRO BY THE SEA

## *Paphos*

Whether visiting or living in Cyprus, few Brits venture this far north of Paphos's harbours: north of the Tombs of the Kings and north even of Coral Bay and Corallia Beaches. If they do, they're likely to be en route to the Blue Lagoon and turtle-lined Akamas Peninsula.

Somewhat less well known, partly due to its seclusion down a turn-off, is Oniro By The Sea—and that's despite it being one of the area's best, coolest restaurants.

Oniro's most obvious USP is its seaside position: right opposite the listing Edro III shipwreck. The 80m-long cargo vessel ran aground in 2011 and makes for an eye-catching if not naturally beautiful backdrop. That's especially true when ocean-spreading sunsets silhouette the boat. To the south are a series of limestone sea caves, photogenically cut into striated white cliffs and illuminated at night.

Wholly al-fresco, Oniro's garden deck sprawls gradually downhill towards the wreck. A high hedge blocks off the road, while palm trees and parasols lend shade. The grass lawn borders blue-white mosaic floor tiles, and a languorous air pervades. Despite the many tables, reserving ahead is near-essential.

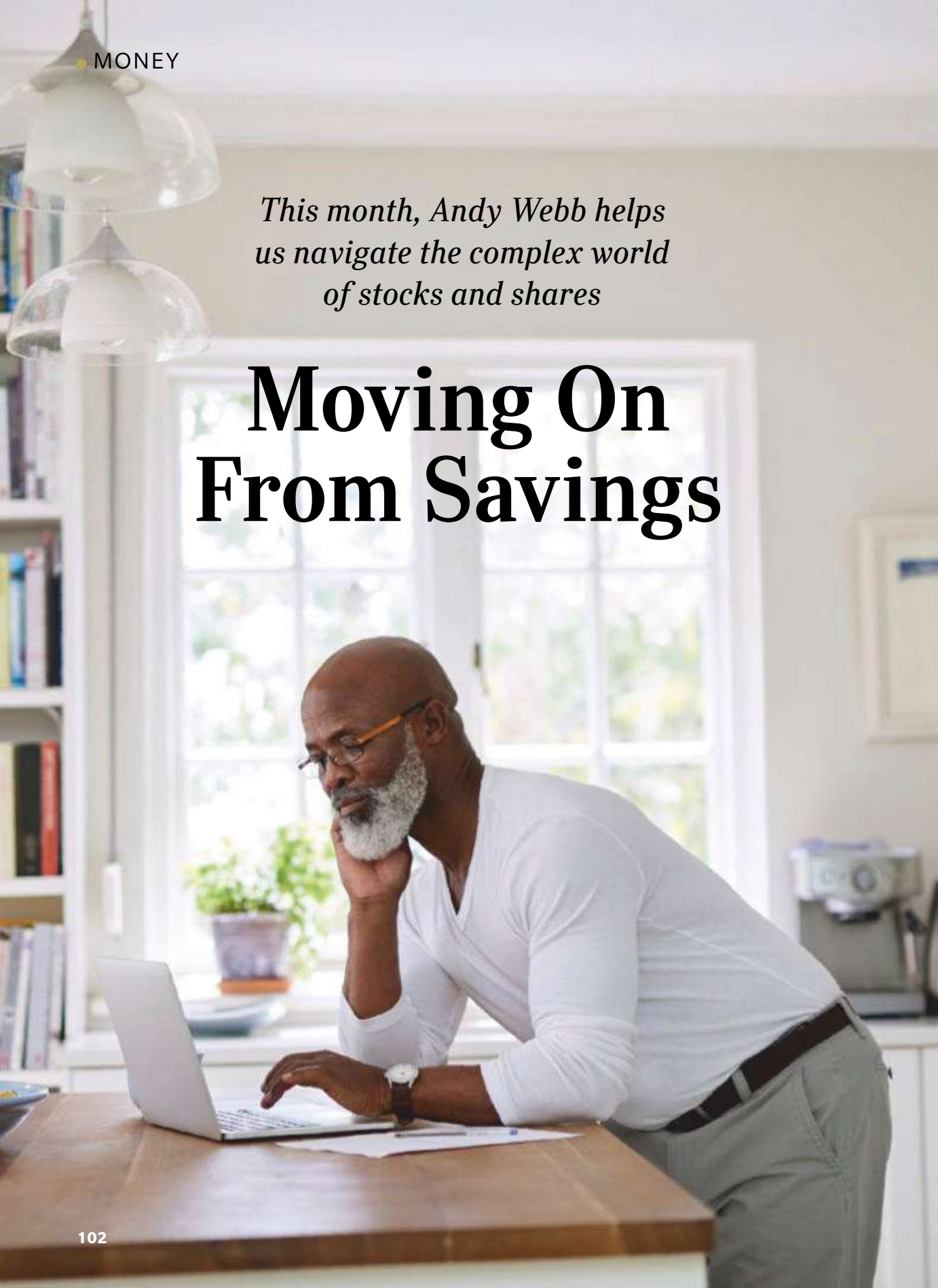
What about the food? Oniro uses local produce where possible and is creative—hence the halloumi and smoked pork-leg pizza, the salad of salmon, fennel and wakame, the mango cheesecake or the lamb loins in a pistachio crust—across skilfully-cooked snacks, mains and desserts. Its drinks, not least a range of mocktails, are equally enterprising. The only drawback is a relative lack of vegan or vegetarian options. ■

By Richard Mellor

# HIDDEN GEMS

*This month, Andy Webb helps us navigate the complex world of stocks and shares*

# Moving On From Savings



ON THE MONEY SPECIAL

Our "On the Money" inbox is often full of readers wondering what to do with their savings. Frustrated by low interest rates and tempted by opportunities to make higher returns elsewhere, it's no wonder people often write or email in to ask about how to get started with investing. This email we received is a typical question on the topic:

**Q: I am in a lucky enough position to be able to put £500 of my earnings into investments each month but I have no idea where to start! I know nothing about stocks and shares or what is worth investing in. Do you have any tips?** *Anon*

Though I'm sure many of you are already investing, this is how a sizable number of readers feel. It's highly likely many will only have invested via their pension contributions—and some might not even realise that their pensions are invested.

This is obviously a huge question to answer, with so many aspects to cover. But it's actually very simple to get started on your own with basic stocks and shares investing and build from there if you wish.

## HOW DO I START INVESTING?

First up, just make sure that your money wouldn't be better off clearing expensive debts or building up cash emergency funds. If that's all looked after, we're almost good to go. But what is investing? You're essentially buying something which you hope to sell at a profit. Though that's not always the case—the value of investments can both go up and down really quickly.

Over time you'd expect to see any losses replaced by gains, but there's no guarantee. There's even the possibility that you may lose most or all of your money! Ultimately the riskier your investment the greater the chance of big returns—but also big losses.

However, don't let this put you off. There are ways to spread the risks (which we'll get to), and it's usually recommended that you move your money into more stable investments the closer you are to needing it. Five years should be the minimum you

want cash invested for.

So where to start? Ignore all those images you have of people shouting "buy" and "sell" in movies like *Wall Street*, or of old men in clubs reading ticker tapes and getting on the phone to their brokers. The reality is much calmer and something you can do on your own.

First of all you need to choose something called a platform. This is a company which will let you buy all the different shares. Think of it like the supermarket you go to in order to buy the individual products.

The big players are people like AJ Bell and Hargreaves Lansdown, though you can also buy direct from providers such as Vanguard. Newer apps like Freetrade have been incredibly popular recently but these are more involved so probably not the best option for newbies.

The one you pick can come down to a few factors, but the cost is probably most important. Over time even 0.5% difference can add up to a huge amount of cash.

Once you've signed up to your chosen platform, you need to open an account with them. The most tax-efficient way is via an Investment ISA (also known as a Stocks and Shares ISA).

This means any money you make from the investment, whether in gains (the price you sell at versus the price you paid) or dividends (bonus payouts you get from some investments) won't be taxed.

You can pay in up to £20,000 in a financial year across the different types of ISA, so if you do want to invest more than this, you'll look for a general investment account.

If you don't plan to access this money until you retire then you might instead want to invest more money in your pension—which has its own tax advantages and potentially free cash from your employer on top.

**Next, you need to decide** what you want to buy. There are lots of options. You can buy shares for one company, government bonds, funds that combine multiple assets and much more beyond.

The simplest way for everyone to begin investing is to buy one of the prepacked funds. These are combinations of different shares from different companies, markets and even countries. These will hopefully mitigate against losses as you're spreading the risk out (though there are different risk levels here too).

Fund choice can get a bit overwhelming, but some platforms will offer simplified options based on your appetite for risk. Or you could look at tracker funds (also known as index funds) like the FTSE 100 where your money is invested in the biggest 100 companies in the UK's stock market. I'm a big fan of these for most investors as you don't need to know anything about the companies you're investing in. They're often usually cheaper too as you don't need a fund manager to watch things (this is passive rather than active investing). There are ethical options too.

The last thing you need to do is decide how much money you want to invest. You can put lump sums aside, add money each month or ideally a combination of the two. You don't need huge amounts of cash to get started. Many platforms will let you invest just a few quid.

Then leave it! If you keep looking at the performance every day or week you could get spooked into selling when the best course of action is likely to let it recover

over time. Though it's still worth reviewing your portfolio to reflect any changes you want to make to your approach or mix of funds.

And if you want to learn more I'd recommend you do some further research. It could also be worth seeking professional financial advice—especially if you want to be active as an investor or get involved in things like property, cryptocurrency or assets such as fine wine and classic cars. ■

Andy Webb is a personal finance journalist and runs the award-winning money blog, *Be Clever With Your Cash*

# Felt-Astic

*It's never too early to get started on your Christmas decor...*

**IT SOUNDS OBVIOUS** but, as a professional crafter, I make a lot of things. I make things almost every day. And I love it! But what I don't love is the waste that it can generate. I take steps to reduce this waste as much as possible—but it's impossible to avoid things like scraps and off-cuts of paper, fabric, card etc.

After a recent project, I was left with quite a few scraps of felt. I collected it into a little pile and it sat in my craft room, unused, for a few weeks. I just couldn't bring myself to throw it away! I knew there must be a use for it... then inspiration struck!

The great thing about this project is that you can literally use anything you have available. Card, fabric, felt, wood, paper, foam, cork... just follow the simple steps below.

Mike Aspinall runs one of the UK's most popular craft blogs, The Crafty Gentleman, where he shares free DIY tutorials

## You will need

- Scraps of felt (or whatever material you want to use)
- A wooden cube or square bead
- Strong glue
- Scissors
- Ruler

## What to do

**1** Decide how wide you want your Christmas tree ornaments to be. This will likely be determined based on the wooden bead you're using for your tree trunk. For instance, I used a 2cm square wooden cube as my trunk—so I decided that a 5.5cm wide tree would look best.

**2** With your size decided, cut out a square of felt to this width. Then cut out lots more squares, each one getting gradually smaller. I ended up

using 22 squares for my ornaments, each one roughly 0.25cm smaller than the last. However, I was using quite a thick felt—so make sure you adjust the number of squares to get the height and shape you want, with the material you're using (generally, using more squares that are closer in size will form a taller, slimmer tree).

**3** Lay out your squares in size order. Apply a pea-sized blob of strong glue to the centre of the largest square. Similarly, add a small blob to the middle of the next largest square. Leave them for approximately a minute to become tacky, then place the glued sides together (aligning the sides neatly), and press firmly together. Hold for a few minutes.

**4** Repeat this process with each subsequent square, to slowly build up the height of the tree.

**5** Once finished, glue the wooden trunk to the base of the tree. Leave it all to dry for 24 hours.

I love that these trees are completely upcycled from waste material—yet they look brand new! For a slightly different effect, try gluing circles together (instead of squares), to change the shape of the tree. You could even use different colours—pretty much any materials and colours you have available would work. It's a great way to stop those scraps from ending up in the bin! ■

# Black Friday Frustration

*Black Friday sales can be a minefield to navigate, so, this month, Bec Oakes shares some vital tips for the bonanza*

**So, we're nearing** the end of 2021 and as November progresses, I anticipate a tidal wave of marketing emails clogging up my inbox. "Get ready for Black Friday!", "Shop Black Friday deals before it's too late". As if a sales associate like myself could ever forget, Black Friday is approaching.

Each year it seems to get crazier, with brands offering bigger and bigger discounts to shoppers. And we lap it up every time. According to Statista, between Black Friday and its online counterpart Cyber Monday, the UK spent £8.6bn in 2019. And this year could be bigger than ever. After missed opportunities in 2020 due to the pandemic, there's sure to be a rush of shoppers heading to the high street to take advantage of absurd discounts and one-off deals.

In all honesty, I just don't get it.

Bec Oakes is a Lancashire-based freelance journalist with particular passions for fashion and culture writing

To start, these brands aren't actually *giving* you anything. They're asking you for money, using "special offers" and "limited deals" to drive sales and shift unwanted stock. And while it makes sense to replace a household appliance that's past its prime at a discounted price, when it comes to clothes, getting a genuinely good deal is not so simple. Discounts sway us into purchasing clothes we neither need nor particularly want. And our keen eye for a Black Friday deal ultimately results in overconsumption, wasted money and regret—the only beneficiaries of our purchases being the brands from which we buy them.

That's not to say there won't be some great deals out there. In 2019, I took advantage of the sales to buy what is now one of my favourite pieces in my wardrobe—a pink double-breasted coat from **Burberry's** Autumn/Winter 2018 collection. It was already discounted at my local outlet mall, but additional Black Friday savings resulted in a discount of 70 per cent. But, finds like this can be hard to

come by. You need to be willing to hunt them out and avoid getting caught up in the moment in favour of a more considered and conscious approach to Black Friday shopping. Here are my top tips.

**Plan ahead.** Before taking to the internet or high street, take stock of what you already own. Look through your wardrobe and see if anything is lacking, then make a list and really focus your attention on finding those pieces. And, Black Friday is actually the perfect opportunity to buy something you couldn't typically afford, my aforementioned Burberry coat being a prime example. Instead of heading to shops in your normal price range, see what discounts are on offer at high-end retailers and invest in something special without breaking the bank. You won't get as much for your money but, while cheap and cheerful fast fashion pieces are great for right now, high-quality classics that'll last for years to come are the real bargain to be had.

**Avoid trend-led pieces.** They're normally the first items to be discounted as retailers make way for new-season stock but are rarely a good investment. While some trends stick around, most quickly fade into obscurity, not becoming fashionable again for years. As we near this year's sales, I anticipate we'll see a lot of bralettes, sheer fabrics, netting and bold shoulders on offer. But, unless you're confident they'll be gracing your frame come summer 2022, it's best to give them a miss.

**Don't forget about your personal style.** It's easy to get caught up in the moment when you see those red sale stickers, but if an item doesn't fit, isn't flattering, won't go with anything in your wardrobe or you simply don't love it, leave it behind. It may be an "incredible deal" but nothing is a bargain if you wouldn't have purchased it otherwise.

As for me, I may moan about Black Friday but that doesn't mean I'll avoid it completely. I actually have a foolproof plan. To start, while I often prefer to shop in-store—it's much more sustainable—I'll be doing all my Black Friday shopping online. A few weeks in advance, I'll put together a wishlist of items I love. Then, as sales start to appear, I'll purchase any that have been discounted. This way I'll only buy pieces that I really want. Happy shopping! ■

# Stripes Vs Spots

*The latest hero ingredient in the fight against acne, Jenessa Williams puts Tiger Grass to the test*

## What Is It?

For those who have grown tired of foundation during the lockdown, Centella Asiatica aka Tiger Grass has become a popular anti-inflammatory ingredient, used to "colour correct" an uneven skintone or fade acne scars. Native throughout tropical wetlands, it is available commercially in both serum and cream formula. Used in eastern medicine for centuries, it gets its nickname thanks to its natural healing qualities; injured tigers have been known to roll around in these plants as a means of soothing their wounds.

## What Are The Benefits?

Chockfull of chlorophyll, Tiger Grass aids cell growth and the formation of a protective skin barrier, staving off the pollutants of the day. By applying to tired or spotty skin, its green hue neutralises the appearance of redness and gently hydrates, bringing a degree of vibrancy without clogging or irritating the pores the way a traditional powder or cream powder foundation might.

## Does It Actually Work?

Yes! For those prone to picking large, aggressive spots, Tiger Grass can be a great way to dull the sting, helping wounds to heal that little bit faster. If you're using it for colour-correction, warm a little in your hands first and massage gently with the pads of your fingers, letting it sink in fully before applying any more as required. With its beigey undertones, fair and lighter skin tones might expect more impressive results, whereas those with medium-to-dark skin might find it works better as a base for light foundation or bronzer. Nonetheless, it's a handy little ingredient to have around—who knows when you might need that little feline boost? ■

# Christmastime means delicious wine....

With Christmas in sight, the experts at ***Virgin Wines*** have shared some delicious food and wine pairings to perfectly match your festive feasting.

## Wines to enjoy with a traditional turkey Christmas dinner

When it comes to pairing wines with turkey, sprouts and lashings of gravy, there are some obvious choices. A classic French Pinot Noir for instance is light-bodied, fruity and perfect with the subtle flavour of turkey. For something different, try a New World wine such as a super-premium Californian or Australian oak aged Chardonnay. These rich and complex wines have toasty oak and nut flavours that are a joy with a traditional Christmas dinner.

## Turkey-alternatives? Try these

A Christmas must-have is an iconic bottle of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Paired with beef, it's a winner. If fish is on the menu, a classic fresh, crisp French Chablis will steal the show. Going meatless? A new world Chilean Cabernet pairs perfectly with a nut roast thanks to rich black fruit on the palate and spice on the nose.

## After the main event

Christmas pudding goes well with a light Italian fizz like Moscato. Light and lower in alcohol, these refreshing aperitifs often have delicate notes of orange blossom and elderflower which cut through a heavy fruit pud perfectly. Cheeseboard fan? Pick up a port with voluptuous fruitiness, mouth filling density and a velvety texture. For an all-rounder, try a chilled Sémillon blend dessert wine from the Graves region of Bordeaux. Delicious!

Virgin wines

## FESTIVE FIVE

**PAUL HOBBS RUSSIAN RIVER CHARDONNAY 2017** (£49.99)
THE ULTIMATE WHITE WINE TO PAIR WITH ROAST TURKEY! THE GRAPES ARE HANDPICKED IN THE COOL OF NIGHT, RESULTING IN A SUPER-PREMIUM CHARDONNAY WITH A RICH AND COMPLEX PALATE.

**PEREZ CRUZ LIGUAI 2016** (£27.99)
A WONDERFULLY RICH CHILEAN CABERNET-BLEND, THAT'S IDEAL FOR WINTER NIGHTS. THIS VEGAN EDITION WORKS BEST WITH RED MEAT AND NUT ROASTS.

**CHATEAU DU SEUIL CERONS 2018** (£16.99)
THE DESSERT WINE OF DREAMS - LUSCIOUSLY SMOOTH AND NOT OVERLY SWEET. ENJOY A SMALL, CHILLED GLASS AT THE END OF CHRISTMAS DINNER.

**DOMAINE MICHEL GIRARD SANCERRE ROUGE 2019** (£15.99)
PINOT NOIR IS LIGHT-BODIED AND FRUITY, IT WON'T OVERPOWER THE TURKEY WHILE PROPELLING CRANBERRY SAUCE TO A NEW HEIGHT. SANCERRE IS A WELL-KNOWN WINE REGION, BUT A RED SANCERRE IS VERY RARE – A FESTIVE TREAT!

**CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE CUVEE SPECIALE 2019** (£21.99)
NO CHRISTMAS IS COMPLETE WITHOUT AN ICONIC PREMIUM FRENCH RED! FANTASTIC ON ITS OWN BUT ALSO PAIRS VERY WELL WITH RED MEAT.

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*Rowena Romulo, co-owner of Romulo Café & Restaurant, located at 343 Kensington High Street, London*

## Chicken & Pork Adobo "Romulo Style"

Whenever I long for a taste of home, my preferred go to dish is Chicken & Pork Belly Adobo. Having lived outside the Philippines for more than 30 years, this dish always brings back nostalgic and happy memories of sitting around my grandparents' dinner table sharing a meal with my family. In addition, as adobo is more of a culinary process—the term is derived from the Spanish word *adobar*, meaning marinade—it is quite versatile and can be used with meat, seafood, or vegetables. Some add coconut milk, tomatoes, turmeric or chillies. At Romulo Café & Restaurant, we add truffles to the sauce. This recipe is the classic adobo with pork belly and chicken which is still my favourite.

A TASTE OF HOME

## INGREDIENTS:

**Serves 2-4**

- **250g of pork belly**
- **200g chicken leg** (cut into pieces)

**Adobo Sauce**

- **3 cups soy sauce** (Datu Puti if available or another Asian brand like Kikkoman)
- **3 cups cane vinegar** (or white wine vinegar)
- **1 cup oyster sauce**
- **1 cup dark brown sugar**
- **1 garlic bulb** peeled and crushed
- **Handful of bay leaves**
- **Handful of whole black peppercorns**
- **150g of silver skin onions or 1 large white onion,** roughly chopped

**Sweet Potato Mash (garnish)**

- **2 pieces of peeled and cubed sweet potatoes**
- **½ cup of milk**
- **2 tablespoons of butter**
- **Salt,** to taste

*Romulo Café & Restaurant's sister restaurant, Kasa and Kin, opened at 52-53 Poland Street, London in October 2021.*

### ADOBO SAUCE (MARINADE):

Add all ingredients together and marinate overnight. Place in a cast iron casserole or large cooking pot and allow to simmer

### CHICKEN LEG COOKING METHOD:

1. Season the chicken with olive oil, salt and cracked black peppercorns.
2. Sear the chicken by frying in a hot pan until golden on both sides.
3. Once golden, add to the adobo sauce and cook for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tender.
4. Cool down the chicken and deep fry for 2 minutes.
5. Then finish cooking in the oven for 5 minutes at 185 degrees.

### PORK BELLY COOKING METHOD:

6. Cook the whole piece of boneless pork belly in the adobo sauce for 2-3 hours until the meat is soft.
7. Cool down in a tray.
8. Cut into portions.
9. Deep-fry for 3 minutes. Then finish cooking in the oven for 5 minutes at 185 degrees.

### SWEET POTATO MASH:

Bring a pot of salted water to boil. Add the potatoes and cook until tender, for about 20 to 30 minutes. With an electric mixer on low, blend the potatoes, slowly adding the milk. Use more or less to achieve the desired texture. Add butter and salt to taste. Blend until smooth.

### PLATING:

Spread the sweet potato mash on the plate. Place the chicken and pork belly on top of the sweet potato mash. Pour some adobo sauce on top. Serve hot.

# World Kitchen

## Iceland:
## *Halibut Soup*

*This month, rising star chef, Gísli Matt, shares his grandmother's recipe for the fabled halibut soup*

"Halibut soup is one of the few recipes that are only found in Iceland, yet it was nearly forgotten. Only older Icelanders remember it. I still use my grandmother's recipe, though I've adapted it to the ingredients I have access to. It's a rich fish broth that is unique in Iceland and has probably never appeared on a restaurant menu before…"

*Ingredients:*

- **20 fresh bay leaves**
- **10g pink peppercorns**
- **10g fennel seeds**
- **Vegetable oil,** for frying
- **4 onions,** chopped
- **12 cloves garlic,** finely chopped
- **300ml white wine**
- **30ml apple cider vinegar**
- **3L fish stock**
- **500ml cream**
- **250ml milk**
- **350g butter**
- **8g xanthan gum or potato /corn starch**
- **Lemon juice**
- **280g halibut or other flatfish fillets**
- **1 green apple**
- **Dried fruits, such as prunes**
- **Sea salt**

*Method:*

1. In a mortar, crush the bay leaves and grind the peppercorns and fennel seeds with a pestle.
2. Heat a bit of oil in a large pot over medium heat, add the onions and garlic and start to cook, then add the spices.
3. After cooking for 10 minutes add the white wine and the vinegar. Cook until the wine is almost evaporated.
4. Add the fish stock and reduce by half. Add the cream, milk and butter and blend with a stick (immersion) blender.
5. While blending, add the xanthan gum or potato or corn starch to thicken the soup a bit. Season with salt and lemon juice to taste.
6. Right before serving, cut the fish into desired portions and add to the soup. The fish should cook for 2–3 minutes.
7. While it's cooking, peel and cut the green apple into about 4mm (generous ⅛-inch) dice.
8. To serve, put the apple, dried fruit and fish into shallow bowls, then pour over the soup.

Taken from *Slippurinn: Recipes and Stories from Iceland* by Gísli Matt, published by Phaidon, £39.95 (phaidon.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY: KARL PETERSSON

# *State Of The Art:* Sola Olulode

Nigerian artist Sola Olulode is inspired by her identity as a queer Black woman

**How would you describe your art?** I would describe my artwork as an exploration of the feelings behind relationships through colour and material in figurative painting.

**Who or what are your main influences?** The relationships that I have experienced and witnessed throughout my life inspire a lot of my work. Although the work is not autobiographical I can only explore the feelings that I have felt myself in the work.

**Could you tell me a little about the influence of Yoruba Adire textiles on your work?** When I began to explore the use of dyes in my work I was particularly drawn to the history of indigo dyeing and it's connection—and my own—to Nigeria. That's how I came to become fascinated by Adire and the traditional methods of resistance dyeing. I began to incorporate the methods they used to create patterns for textiles as a way to expand of the materiality of my figurative paintings.

**You work across many mediums, from textiles to pastels and painting. Do you have a favourite?** I think my absolute favourite medium to work with will always be oil paints. There's something about the richness of colour that you get from the paint that I love so much, as intense colour plays such a huge role in setting the tone for my work.

**What can viewers of your new show in Switzerland look forward to?** Viewers of my presentation at the Volta Art Fair can expect to see a new experiment with how to hang a painting from me. I've always wanted to take my work off the standard frame and hang it in a more interesting way as I'm fed up with the stiffness of a stretched canvas. I think the wooden bars that I've chosen to hang my works with are great for this bed theme. For me when I look at them I see the painting extended, I see the bars as the frame of the bed. The way it hangs looser brings it back closer to the textiles that have influenced my work.

**How did you come to the title of your presentation, "I Love Sharing The Bed With You"?** The title came quite simply to me as I thought around the reasons why I enjoyed creating these scenes of couples in bed and what it was about this particular setting for couples that resonated with me. In my personal life laying in bed with a loved one is my happiest place. ■

Visit solaolulode.co.uk to learn more

★★★★☆

# BOILING POINT

IT'S UNDISPUTABLE THAT there's something magnetic about chefs. Whether it's their super-human work ethic, insane passion for their craft or the elusive gift of being able to taste things the rest of us can't—the sheer volume of TV shows, films, books and media furore centred around chefs is proof that we just can't get enough of them.

*Boiling Point* is the latest addition to this cook-fixated canon: a snappy picture (the entire film was shot in one take!) of a busy night in the kitchen, with Stephen Graham's moody, volatile chef Andy at the forefront. Having a rough time in his life outside of the restaurant makes it extra hard for him to keep his cool inside. It's a revelation to see Graham in a role that truly allows him the space and time to demonstrate what he's capable of: his Andy carries a great deal of potency and honesty, which spirals gradually out of control as his patience wears thin. He's supported here by a talented ensemble cast: the level-headed sous-chef Carly who keeps Andy's rage at bay; his greedy, manipulative former colleague-turned-celebrity chef Alistair; the salt-of-the-earth pastry genius Emily—and many more who bring oodles of flavour and texture to this film.

Just like Andy's cooking, described by a food critic in the film as "understated, simple and not complicating itself", *Boiling Point* is comfortable in its own skin. It doesn't feel the need to wow us; instead, it simply sweeps us along on the kitchen shift so we can revel in the madness.

By Eva Mackevic

© VERTIGO FILMS

# *4 More Great Films About Chefs*

**TAMPOPO** (1985)
Dubbed a "ramen western", this funny, offbeat Japanese gem is a true ode to food and all the joys it brings. The story is simple: two truck drivers stop by a decrepit noodle shop owned by a widow and single mum, Tampopo. Through an unusual set of circumstances, they become friends and help her learn how to cook great noodles. Peppered with imaginative vignettes poeticising the link between food and love, it's become a bona fide cult classic.

**BIG NIGHT** (1996)
Stanley Tucci and Tony Shalhoub star as two Italian brothers struggling to save their failing restaurant in 1950s New Jersey. It's simple, sophisticated and sumptuous watching, brimming with passion for life, love and food. Minnie Driver and Isabella Rossellini co-star.

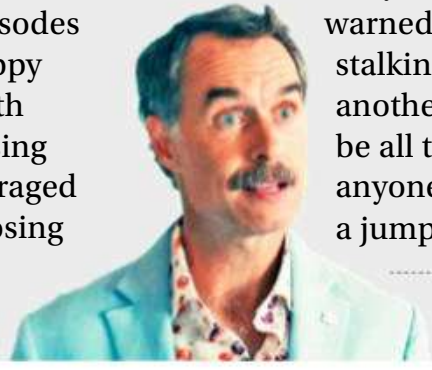
**RATATOUILLE** (2007)
Its lead may be an animated rat, but no listicle of the greatest films about chefs is complete without the Pixar classic, *Ratatouille*. A lowly rat from the Parisian sewers has an unlikely dream: to become a chef. His wish sort of comes true when he finds himself in the kitchen of a top restaurant, assisting a goofy garbage boy. It was celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain's favourite food-centric movie.

**CHEF** (2014)
This colourful, vibrant comedy-drama was directed by, and stars Jon Favreau who assembled a scintillating cast to accompany him, including Robert Downey Jr, Scarlett Johansson, Dustin Hoffman and many others. Laidback but heartfelt, it tells the story of a chef who quits his job, acquires a food truck and hits the road in an attempt to stay true to his creative vision. Comes with a remarkably good soundtrack, too.

Even as the clocks go back, TV offers cut-price getaways, with major broadsheet talking point ***The White Lotus*** (NOW TV) dispatching a clutch of rich jerks to blight a deluxe Hawaiian holiday resort. The success of *Succession* has demonstrated there's an audience that enjoys watching awful people behaving badly; these guests are at least funny-awful, and you'll spend hours arguing what's ultimately being said on the thorny matter of privilege. Creator Mike White, the perverse mastermind behind the HBO masterpiece *Enlightened*, remains to social awkwardness what Michelangelo was to clay.

Where *The White Lotus* is mischief from the off, ***Nine Perfect Strangers*** (Prime Video) is slower-burn and soapier: eight weekly episodes in which variously unhappy folk visiting a lavish health retreat (in Australia, passing for California) are encouraged by Nicole Kidman's imposing Russian wellness guru to air out their issues. Their secrets, too, for this is a show with something of that strung-out ratings hit *Lost* in its DNA. Excellent performers withhold and erupt as the plot requires: Melissa McCarthy (as an acerbic scribe) and Regina King (as a sweetie-pie with anger issues) are among the standouts.

Prefer your entertainment more Baltic than Pacific? Steer towards visceral five-parter ***The North Water*** (BBC2; iPlayer), set aboard a 19th-century whaling vessel sailing from Hull to the outer reaches of the Arctic Circle. Another impressive crew here: upright doctor Jack O'Connell clashes with brooding harpooner Colin Farrell, while captain Stephen Graham looks on. It's a salty old yarn updated with streaming-service money and content, though be warned: scenes of the crew stalking their prey—and one another—across the ice may be all the encouragement anyone needs to reach for a jumper.



by Mike McCahill

## *Retro Pick:*

***15 Storeys High***

*(iPlayer)*

Alternatively, stay in with this distinctively deadpan Noughties council-flat comedy, reissued to commemorate the passing of writer-star Sean Lock.

## *Album Of The Month:*

***-io***

by Circuit Des Yeux

US ARTIST HALEY FOHR aka Circuit Des Yeux sure knows how to pack a punch. A deep, haunting one, that's akin to a cosmic out-of-body-experience. She lets you know you're in for a turbulent ride from the get go; her new album *-io* opens with a blood-curdling 30-second piano-drop intro—the kind that plays out when the killer strikes his unsuspecting victim. From then on, she consistently builds on this theme of shock, with each track going into places you'd least expect. There's the show-stopping funereal waltz "Neutron Star" that evokes a sense of morose nostalgia, preceded by the unnerving "Sculpting the Exodus" dabbling playfully in baroque opera, and the agonising "Stranger" which sees Fohr howling like the mythical La Llorona, mourning the children she drowned.

Nothing on *-io* is superfluous or unexamined, and every millisecond is a tiny yet essential particle of an enormous dark universe she's weaved: from the weird electronic buzzing in the background of "Argument" to the razor-sharp, PJ Harvey-inspired whispers on "The Chase".

Resolute in her vision, Fohr wrote, arranged, and produced the entire album, including its 23-piece orchestra arrangements and awe-inspiring melodies. It's a dynamic work with her towering, four-octave vocal range dangerously rumbling beneath each song.

by Eva Mackevic

## *From The Vaults...*

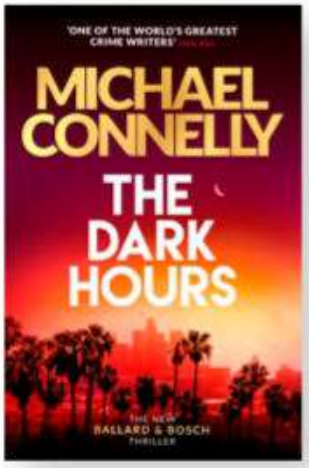
**Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers**

*First Flight To Tokyo: The Lost 1961 Recordings*

With the recent passing of Rolling Stones' drummer and long-time jazz aficionado Charlie Watts, what better excuse to revisit the work of some of the greats who inspired him? Art Blakey is widely regarded as one of the greatest jazz drummers—and bandleaders—who ever lived. On November 5, Blue Note are releasing a remarkable, previously lost live recording of Blakey and his band, The Jazz Messengers', first ever tour of Japan. The line-up includes the legendary Lee Morgan on trumpet, Wayne Shorter on sax, Bobby Timmons on piano, and Jymie Merritt on bass, playing iconic numbers like "Moanin" and "A Night in Tunisia". Fiery melodies, hell-raising drum solos, and masterful harmonies—what's not to love?

# November Fiction

*This month, a veteran crime writer returns with a thrill-packed yet incisive look at present-day America*




***The Dark Hours***
**by Michael Connelly**
*Orion, £20*

**NOT FOR NOTHING** is Michael Connelly one of the biggest selling and most acclaimed crime writers in the world. His books combine brilliantly plotted police procedural, terrific set-pieces, tough but humane central detectives and a fantastically vivid sense of place (the place in question being Los Angeles). But there's something else as well. While never forgetting the need to thrill, his work—as befits that of a former journalist—provides a sharp and often very troubling guide to a changing America, with real-life events blended smoothly into the fiction.

His latest opens on December 31, 2020: a year that "for most people in the world… couldn't end soon enough." The American police, though, have more to worry about than just a global pandemic. Since the protests calling for their defunding that followed the death of George Floyd, their job has become so difficult and their morale so low that avoiding controversy has become more important than fighting crime. As a result, many officers these days are "looking to do as little as possible between now and retirement, no matter how far away it was".

This is the backdrop against which

James Walton is a book reviewer and broadcaster, and has written and presented 17 series of the BBC Radio 4 literary quiz *The Write Stuff*

Connelly's newest detective, Renée Ballard, joins forces with his oldest, Harry Bosch, to solve two particularly tricky cases: one featuring what seems to be a serial killer, the other a pair of serial rapists known as the Midnight Men. Both Ballard and Bosch will need every scrap of their toughness and humanity to succeed, much of the time against the wishes of their quiet-life-seeking colleagues.

As ever, they go about their business in a way that's thoroughly compelling without being remotely flashy, but that still leads up to a heart-thumping climax. As ever too, Connelly isn't content merely to sketch the many aspects of LA life that they encounter—including Hispanic gangs, rich dentists and, somewhat unexpectedly, the city's street lighting department. Instead, he fully colours them in.

Thirty-odd books into his career, and with his reputation firmly established, Connelly could perhaps be forgiven for coasting a little by now. So far, though, he shows no sign of it.

## *Name the author*

**Can you guess the writer from these clues (the fewer you need the better)?**

**1.** The wrestler Big Daddy took that name from a character in one of his plays.
**2.** In another of his plays, the main character is Blanche DuBois.
**3.** His first name is the American state whose capital is Nashville.

Answer on p126

# Paperbacks

***Life Support***
**by Jim Down** (Viking, £9.99).
An intensive-care NHS doctor's diary of life on the COVID frontline. Frank, alarming and sometimes even funny.

***Under A Greek Moon***
**by Carol Kirkwood** (HarperFiction, £7.99). A Hollywood star goes in search of her lost love in this highly accomplished heart-warmer from the TV weather presenter.

***The Western Front***
**by Nick Lloyd** (Penguin, £12.99).
Decades of received wisdom are overthrown as Lloyd convincingly argues that the Western Front was far from an exercise in murderous futility. Instead it was a heroic, well-led military victory.

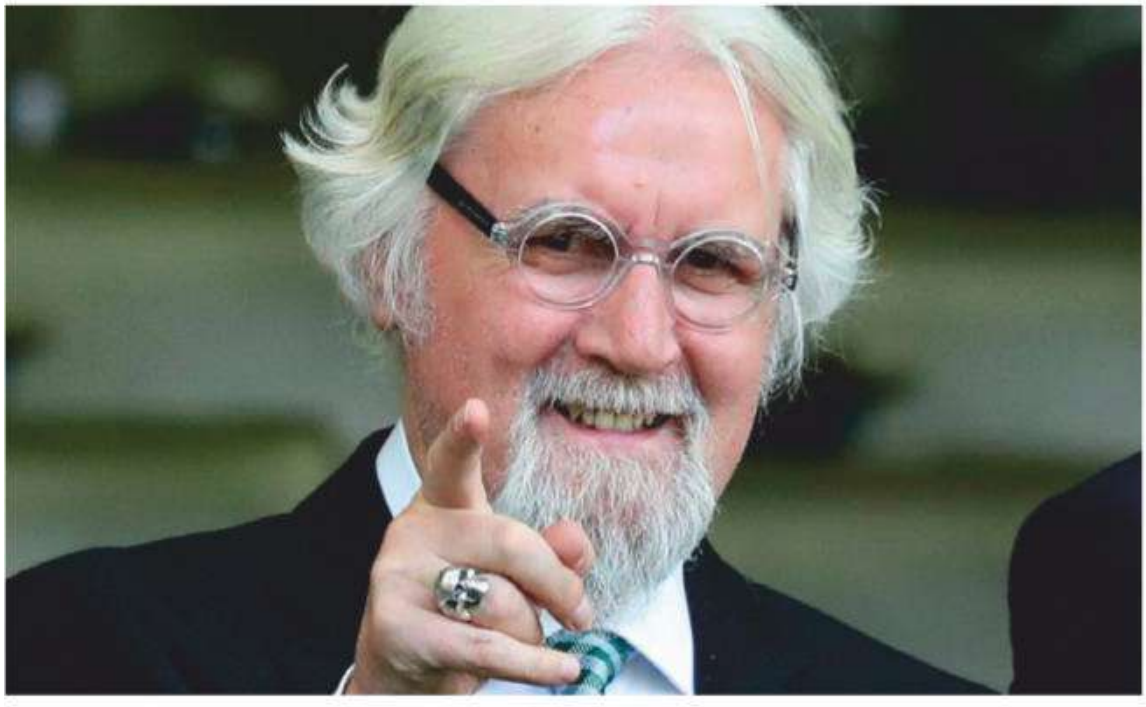
***When the Lights Go Out***
**by Carys Bray** (Windmill, £8.99).
Thoughtful and witty novel about a marriage threatened by the husband's obsession with climate change.

***The Commonwealth of Cricket***
**by Ramachandra Guha** (William Collins, £9.99). One of India's best-known historians on his lifelong love affair with the game—and his worries about how it's now being run in his home country.

READER'S DIGEST RECOMMENDED READ:

# Being Billy

*The much-loved Scottish comedian Billy Connolly shares his hard-earned wisdom spiked with bawdy anecdotes*



PA IMAGES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

**IN THE BOOKS WORLD,** as Christmas approaches, 'tis once again the season to publish celebrity autobiographies (see the sidebar). But will any be as candid as Billy Connolly's?

Two-thirds of the way through, Billy reveals that he's dictating *Windswept and Interesting* into a phone. By then, however, this doesn't come as a total surprise—because the book is a loose and chatty ramble through his life and times, with regular digressions into such things as his favourite biscuits.

There's a complete absence of PR polish too, with Billy both admitting and sometimes displaying his refusal to always play nice. He makes no attempt to disguise

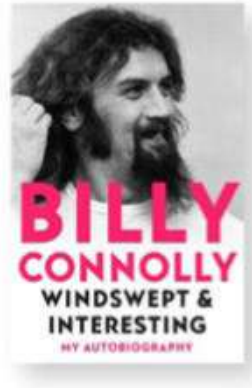
his continuing if understandable bitterness about the cruelty of his Aunt Mona, who brought up him and his sister Florence after the break-up of his parents' marriage. Nor has he forgotten or forgiven the violence of many of his teachers (tellingly, the sexual abuse by his father is passed over in a couple of sentences that end "I just buried all that shame"). Later, he spares us little in describing the various effects of his Parkinson's disease, among them greatly increased flatulence.

Yet, what's most striking about the book is how extraordinary the arc of Billy's life has been: from the Glasgow tenements to Hollywood, by way of the Clydeside shipyards, the Paras, the 1970s Scottish folk scene (when he was in a duo with Gerry Rafferty) and performing stand-up to packed audiences across the world. There were also his years as an alcoholic, before his second wife Pamela Stephenson encouraged/forced him to clean up.

But here he is when, aged four and living in Glasgow's Dover Street, his life was about to take a sudden change for the worse…

> "We lived on the third floor of our tenement, and there was a smelly communal toilet on the landing. Our little two-roomed flat was a bit gloomy. I just remember an alcove bed, a kitchen table, and a sideboard with a drawer that was my crib when I was a baby. There was no bathroom, and no hot water; Florence washed both of us standing up in the kitchen. All this may sound awful, but it wasn't. There was a warmth about tenements, because of the people who lived in them. They were colourful, vertical villages. Sure, they were considered slums. People say, 'Oh, the *deprivation*!' Nonsense! When you're a wee boy it's not like that. It felt great to have all these nice neighbours. And we had a big wooden toilet seat… luxury!
>
> I was born on the kitchen floor on 24 November 1942, during World War Two. That's the only date you're getting in this book, because my birthday's the only one I can remember. A few years ago, I forgot Pamela's birthday and had to get it tattooed on my arm, but I still missed it the next year because I forgot to look. Anyway, when I was born my dad was away fighting in Burma and India. I don't remember my mother being there much. Maybe she worked—I don't know. She was

***Windswept And Interesting: My Autobiography*** *is published by Two Roads at £25*



an attractive teenager—like a British film starlet—with wavy dark hair and a smiley face. Everybody I met later who knew her said she was funny, and so volatile she could start a fire in an empty room.

I don't remember her hugging me, although I remember her smell. It was Florence who looked after me. She bathed me, fed me, dressed me. Tried to keep me out of trouble. Florence was only 18 months older than I was. It never occurred to us that she was far too young to be in that position, with no adult around for hours on end.

But I felt jolly when Florence was next to me. We slept together in the alcove bed in the kitchen, and she used to teach me songs. She also used to shine a hand mirror on the wall, making a circle of light. She chased me with it till I screeched like a parrot.

The most profound memory I have from 65 Dover Street was the time I woke early and went to look for my mother. I opened the door to her bedroom and saw a stranger—a shirtless man, sitting in a chair, putting on his socks. I realised my mother was in bed, but I couldn't see her because she was behind the door. This guy just put his foot on my forehead and gently pushed me out the door, then closed it. I found out later his name was Willie Adams, my mother's lover. Shortly afterwards, she left us. ”

## More Celebrity Autobiographies For Christmas

***The Unapologetic Diaries* by Joan Collins** (Weidenfeld, £20). Prepare for some serious bean-spilling as Dame Joan records her life between 1989 and 2009, with a supporting cast that includes Rod Stewart, Princess Margaret, Donald Trump, Michael Caine, Princess Diana and Elizabeth Taylor.

***A Funny Life* by Michael McIntyre** (Macmillan, £20). The second volume of McIntyre's memoirs cover the years of fame—with, of course, lots of humour.

***A Bit of Me* by Denise van Outen** (Ebury, £20). How a Nineties "ladette" made it to a starring role on Broadway—and (just about) survived her mistreatment by the tabloids.

***Playmaker* by Glenn Hoddle** (HarperCollins, £20). Hoddle's playing career ranged from Spurs to Monaco under Arsène Wenger. As a manager, he led England to the 1998 World Cup. Here he reflects on it all.

## *And the name of the author is...*

**Tennessee Williams.** Big Daddy is in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (for the record, Tennessee was a pen name—his real first name was Thomas).

# Books

## THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Candice Carty-Williams' Sunday Times Bestseller *Queenie* was one of the best-loved books of last year's lockdown. Her new novel, *Empress & Aniya* is available in paperback and on Audible (published by Knights Of)

### *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison

I was the sort of child who would run to get the new book in this series every time it was released. There was no social media then, so you just had to go to W H Smiths and ask, "Hi, when is the next one coming?". I remember just laughing breathlessly at them—I don't think I've ever laughed so much at anything! Those books were really important to me, and now that I'm an adult and I know about different editions, I have three different sets of the series in my house. You can tell when someone has read Louise Rennison—there's a specific brand of humour that comes from her books.

### *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine

*Citizen* is a collection of essays, poetry and lamentations on race in the US, which extends out to the UK. I borrowed it from a colleague, locked myself away over lunchtime and just devoured it. It's really important to me because it was the first thing that I read that made me understand what microaggression was, and then everything kind of made sense, the ways that people had made me feel in my own skin. It was the first time that I had felt seen. After that life was a lot smoother, because I knew there was a name for what I was experiencing, and when you name things, that's when you can understand them. It was an eye-opening collection, that made me understand what I'd been navigating.

### *Here Comes the Sun* by Nicole Dennis-Benn

This novel is set in Montego Bay and it's about a single mother dealing with the eldest child syndrome, where nothing you do is right. She's also in a relationship with a woman, which in Jamaica is a big no. So it's talking about all of these quite hard cultural conversations, that I think are really important—it's talking about sexuality, it's talking about positioning, and the family. I think Nicole Dennis-Benn has found the pressure points that nobody talks about, and is exploring those through the most gorgeous fulsome writing. It's my favourite book of all time.

# Back Up Before You Mess Up

*James O'Malley on the importance and ways of backing up your data*

WHETHER IT'S DOING the washing up or filing a tax return, unfortunately, in life there are a range of dull but important tasks that we just have to get done. And in these modern times making sure that your most important files are backed up can be added to this list. It's something we should all probably take more care over, before it is too late.

The problem is that digital storage doesn't last forever. Hard disks fail, phones tumble out of our pockets, and tablets are beaten up by grandchildren. This is why it is important to think carefully about your back-up strategy. You don't want to lose a lifetime of family photos just because your laptop had an unfortunate encounter with a glass of water.

Unfortunately, there isn't a single gadget or app that can take care of backing up for you. But what I recommend is that you should aim to have two different sorts of back-up: one online, and one offline.

Having both is a good idea because it provides extra redundancy. You don't want to entirely rely on the Cloud, just in case you lose access to your account, or if the provider closes down. And you don't want to rely exclusively on offline storage, say, on a plug-in hard disk stored at the back of a cupboard, because if disaster strikes then your back-up will burn down alongside your computer and the rest of your belongings.

Online back-ups are arguably the easier of the two to sort out. All of the big tech players have online storage you can treat like your own hard disk. Google has Google Drive, Apple has iCloud, and Microsoft has OneDrive. And then there's Amazon storage, Dropbox, and many others.

All you have to do is download the app for whichever service you want to use to your computer or phone. Then

it's easy to upload and download files to the Cloud for safe keeping. Most Cloud storage apps even have the option to automatically upload your camera roll, so when you take new photos they'll be sent up to the Cloud as soon as you connect to wifi.

## YOU SHOULD AIM TO HAVE TWO DIFFERENT SORTS OF BACK-UP: ONE ONLINE, AND ONE OFFLINE

Offline storage is slightly trickier. Looking after Cloud files is Google's or Microsoft's problem. But offline, figuring out what equipment to buy is something you need to figure out for yourself.

The most obvious option is to buy a portable USB hard drive. Just plug it into your computer and you can copy important files to it. This is definitely a better approach than doing absolutely nothing, but there's still a problem: if your back-up drive fails, you still lose everything.

This is why if you're serious about backing up—and you should be—I recommend the slightly pricier option of getting a device known as a NAS.

NAS stands for "Network Attached Storage" and is basically a mini computer that you can plug directly into your wifi router.

There are many different NAS options on the market from companies like Synology, Western Digital, and QNAP. Some companies have devices available that contain only one hard drive, but I recommend buying one with space for at least two.

This is because on most NAS models, two hard disks can work together to keep your files safe. Instead of appearing as separate hard disks, they can be combined using a feature called "RAID".

RAID stands for "Redundant Array of Independent Disks" and it basically tells your NAS to treat the two hard disks inside it as though they were one drive, with the contents mirrored on both drives automatically. It means that if one of the two drives goes kaput, you still have a perfectly functioning mirror copy with all of your files safely stored on it.

And finally, the bad news. The price. A decent NAS tends to start at around £300, and that excludes the price of the hard disks themselves (the cost will vary depending on how much storage space you need). But before you scream in horror, remember—this is for your most important files, to keep them safe.

So, as annoying as it might sound, this is important. Just as you wouldn't leave your home with a risky boiler or drive a car with faulty brakes. It's time to do the boring but important thing and spend the money to get your data backed up—before it is too late. ■

# You Couldn't Make It Up

*Win £30 for your true, funny stories!*

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or **facebook.com/readersdigestuk**

**I went to a very strict Roman Catholic school** in the 1950s. And I really mean strict! I shall always remember an occasion when one of the teachers, Father O'Malley, saw me kissing a girl just outside the school gates.

He said to me, "My son, I hope you do realise that you're on the road to perdition!".

So I said to him, "Actually, Father, I think you're mistaken... this is the road to Watford!

DAVID WEBB, *West Sussex*

**I had to suppress a smile when I asked my** year four pupils to write a short letter to a celebrity as part of their English lesson, and it had to be appropriate to that person.

One boy impressed; he wrote to Liam Neeson. It went like this: "Dear Liam. I have your daughter. You have 24 hours."

MAXINE COOPER, *London*

**My husband had a man-to-man talk with our grandson.** He told him that in the future he would have feelings for girls. Our grandson nodded and replied he already had feelings for them. Surprised, his granddad asked what he meant. Our grandson retorted, "They make me really, really mad!".

DEMI ROBERTS, *Flintshire*

**My eight-year-old son had started to complain** he had a sore, itchy foot. So I took him to a pharmacy and they soon diagnosed athlete's foot and sent us away with some

"LISTEN CHAPS, IN THE FUTURE INVEST IN FIREWORKS"

cream to apply each evening.

A few nights later, as I tucked him into bed, he suddenly called out, "You forgot to put on the cream for my Olympic foot!".

JENNIE GARDNER, *Bath*

**Our neighbour, Joe, has a vintage car** and while we were chatting to him one day, we were trying to get him to reveal just how old it was.

"Put it this way," he confided, "It's been insured against fire, theft and Vikings!".

SHULA CLARKSON, *Norfolk*

**My mother is seven years older than my father,** and he never lets her forget it.

It was her birthday recently and he put just one candle on her cake.

She seemed puzzled, and he told her, "Well, I didn't want to put a strain on your lungs."

JOANNE AITCHISON, *Merseyside*

**A few years ago, my father-in-law set about a task** in the kitchen that his wife required to be undertaken. He placed the necessary tools and equipment on the worktop in readiness for the work and then briefly left the kitchen (either for a quick cigarette or to relieve himself).

On his return, the worktop was clear of his preparations and he enquired as to their whereabouts, upon which his wife said she had tidied them away as he had left them lying around, cluttering up the kitchen!

ALLAN BRIDGER, *Hampshire*

CARTOON BY *Guto Dias*

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IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

# Word Power

***Going abroad introduces us to unfamiliar sights and sounds and jolts us out of our linguistic comfort zones. How well can you navigate the following travel terms?***

BY CRYSTAL BELIVEAU

1. **lark**—A: naive tourist. B: chance discovery. C: amusing adventure.

2. **shibboleth**—A: identifying habit of speech. B: Buddhist temple spire. C: book of sailing directions.

3. **hedge-hop**—A: wander aimlessly. B: fly at low altitude. C: trespass.

4. **sojourn**—A: temporary stay. B: overnight trip. C: homesickness.

5. **purlieu**—A: outpost. B: area surrounding a place. C: traditional nomadic dwelling.

6. **Cockaigne**—A: French dish. B: celebrity frequent flyer. C: place of extreme luxury.

7. **solivagant**—A: lone wanderer. B: narrow road. C: one-way journey.

8. **psychogeography**—A: study of unpredictable travel behaviour. B: practice of exploring an urban space by foot. C: effect of environment on personality.

9. **terminus**—A: final car on a train. B: aircraft's flight path while waiting to land. C: end of a route.

10. **impedimenta**—A: roadblock. B: bulky gear for an activity. C: confusing situation.

11. **open-jaw**—A: multilingual. B: guided culinary tour. C: ticket to land at one place and depart from another.

12. **acculturate**—A: adapt to another place or group. B: meet all vaccination requirements. C: become jaded.

13. **omphalos**—A: heavy, oversized bag. B: central hub. C: hospitality.

14. **thalassic**—A: very old. B: panoramic. C: relating to inland seas.

15. **exonym**—A: name foreigners use for a place. B: name of an ethnic group. C: name well-suited to an area.

# Answers

1. **lark**—[C] amusing adventure. For a *lark*, Elliot called in sick to work, drove to France and attended a skydiving course.

2. **shibboleth**—[A] identifying habit of speech. One *shibboleth* that distinguishes Welsh speakers from other Britons is the "ll" sound.

3. **hedge-hop**—[B] fly at low altitude. The weather was bad, but the bush pilot managed to *hedge-hop* the hikers into camp.

4. **sojourn**—[A] temporary stay. The three-day *sojourn* in Positano was the best part of our driving tour of Italy's Amalfi Coast.

5. **purlieu**—[B] area surrounding a place. Miami's *purlieu* is chock full of expatriate Quebecers.

6. **Cockaigne**—[C] place of extreme luxury. Our multi-million-pound waterfront property is the *Cockaigne* of cottages.

7. **solivagant**—[A] lone wanderer. An introvert since his childhood, Huang enjoyed his year as a *solivagant* in South America.

8. **psychogeography**—[B] practice of exploring an urban space by foot. A pamphlet about *psychogeography* inspired Sébastien to stroll attentively through Hong Kong.

9. **terminus**—[C] end of a route. Take the tramline to its *terminus* and you'll see the hostel across the street.

10. **impedimenta**—[B] bulky gear for an activity. Sarah's canoe was loaded with camping *impedimenta*.

11. **open-jaw**—[C] ticket to land at one place and depart from another. Cornelius bought an *open-jaw* that flies into Dublin and out of Rome.

12. **acculturate**—[A] adapt to another place or group. Julia was doing her best to *acculturate* to the slower pace of life in Cornwall.

13. **omphalos**—[B] central hub. This outdoor market is the *omphalos* of the local economy.

14. **thalassic**— [C] relating to inland seas. Greece's *thalassic* islands are known for their ancient archaeological sites.

15. **exonym**—[A] name foreigners use for a place. Germany is an *exonym* for Deutschland.

**VOCABULARY RATINGS**
**7–10:** fair
**11–12:** good
**13–15:** excellent

# TRIVIA

BY *Samantha Rideout*

**1.** Even during a power outage, food-crop seeds would remain safely frozen in the Global Seed Vault, located where?

**2.** What is generally considered to be the first science-fiction film?

**3.** What major sports tournament requires players to dress in white, to minimise the visibility of sweat marks?

**4.** What collectible plastic-brick toy sets can sell for thousands of dollars and have even become targets for thieves?

**5.** On average, how much time passes between two high tides?

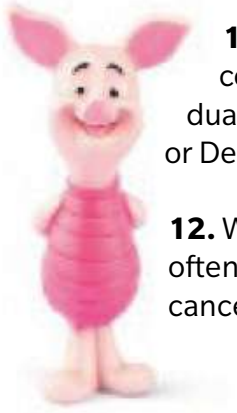
**6.** Anne Bonny and Mary Read were notable 18th-century women because of their occupations as what?

**7.** Residents of Chumbivilcas, Peru, celebrate Christmas by challenging each other to what?

**8.** Every human has wisdom teeth. True or false?

**9.** What's the biggest wild cat native to the Americas?

**10.** For what movie did Jordan Peele receive the Oscar for best original screenplay, becoming the first Black screenwriter to win that category?



**11.** Which of the following countries does not recognise dual citizenship: China, Turkey or Denmark?

**12.** What kind of wine is often sold to support breast-cancer awareness?

**13.** He inspired the idea of "short man syndrome," but roughly how tall was Napoleon in reality?

**14.** Until 2018, what popular and spicy German street food had a museum dedicated to it in Berlin?

**15. In 2000, Canadian psychologists published a tongue-in-cheek paper diagnosing Winnie the Pooh and his friends with disorders. According to the paper, Piglet clearly suffers from what?**

---

**Answers: 1.** Svalbard, Norway. **2.** Georges Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* (1902). **3.** Wimbledon. **4.** Lego. **5.** Roughly 12 hours and 25 minutes. **6.** Pirates. **7.** Fist fights. **8.** False. Increasingly, people are born with no wisdom teeth under the gums at all. **9.** The jaguar. **10.** *Get Out*. **11.** China. **12.** Rosé. **13.** 168 to 170 centimetres, which was average in France at the time. **14.** Currywurst (curry sausage). **15.** Generalised anxiety disorder.

PHOTO: ©GETTY IMAGES

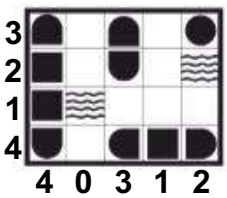
# BRAIN TEASERS

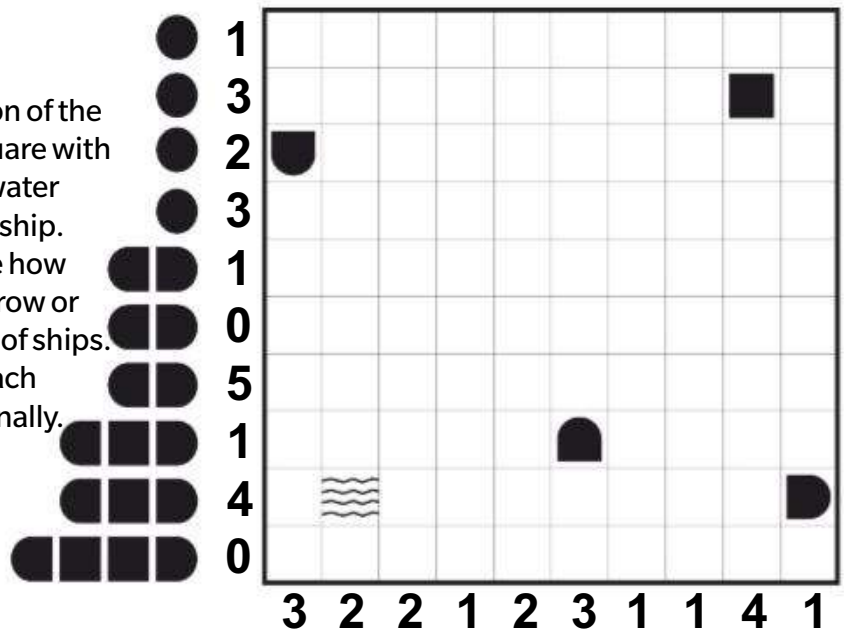
Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles, then check your answers on p139

## Ships

**HOW TO PLAY:**
Determine the position of the ten ships listed. A square with wavy lines indicates water and will not contain a ship. The numbers indicate how many squares in that row or column contain parts of ships. No two ships touch each other, not even diagonally.

**EXAMPLE:**

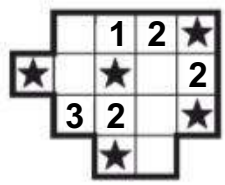


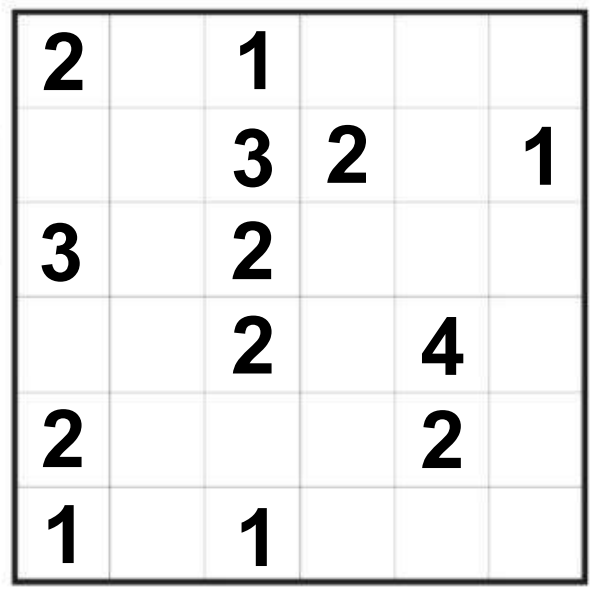




## Star Search

**HOW TO PLAY:**
Find the stars that are hidden in some of the blank squares. The numbered squares indicate how many stars are hidden in squares adjacent to it (including diagonally).

**EXAMPLE:**



# SIXY SUDOKU

**HOW TO PLAY:**
Insert the numbers 1 to 6 just once in each a) row, b) column, c) bold outlined area and d) white or grey rectangle.

**EXAMPLE:**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| 6 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 |

**BEWARE!** The bold outlined areas are no longer 2x3!

**1**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 4 | |
| | 4 | | 5 | | 2 |
| | | | | | 6 |
| | 3 | 6 | 1 | | |
| 4 | | | | 6 | 5 |
| | | | | | |

**2**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | | | | | |
| | | | 2 | | |
| 5 | | | | 3 | |
| | | | | 5 | |
| | 1 | | | | |
| | | 6 | | | 4 |

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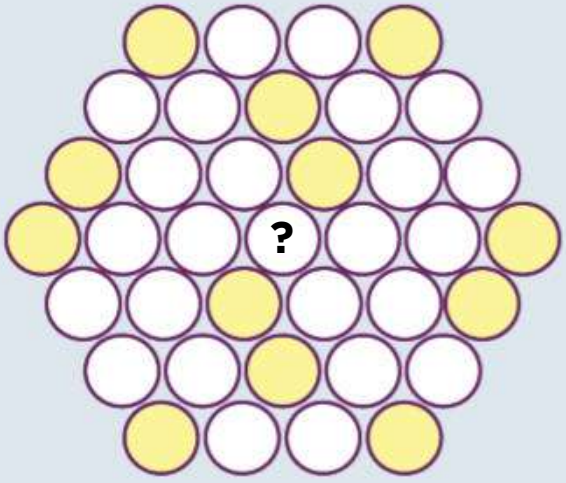
# £50 PRIZE QUESTION

## COLOURFUL CHOICE

Should the middle circle be yellow or white?

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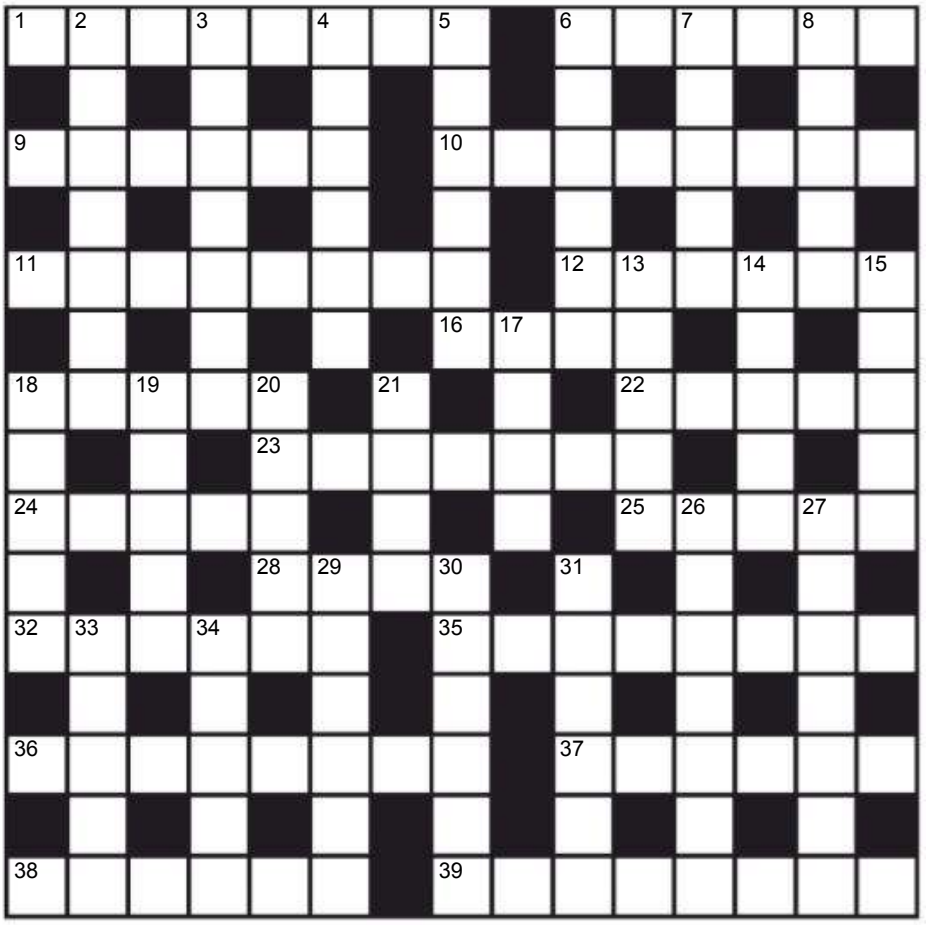
ANSWER TO OCTOBER'S PRIZE QUESTION

## DIVIDE AND ANSWER

19

## AND THE £50 GOES TO...

**PAUL SCHLEISING,** *Flintshire*



## CROSSWISE

Test your general knowledge. Answers on p142

### ACROSS

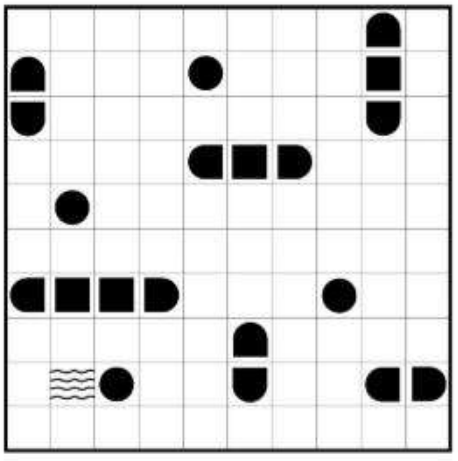
1 Fall apart (8)
6 Calls on (6)
9 Second-smallest banknote (6)
10 Wide view of an extensive area (8)
11 Resident of, eg, Tobermory, Portree or Ventnor (8)
12 Fast (6)
16 Reflected sound (4)
18 Storage centre (5)
22 Ruin (5)
23 Dense collection of housing (7)
24 Give consent (5)
25 The devil (5)
28 60 per cent of us live here (4)
32 25 per cent (6)
35 Snakes (8)
36 Appreciative (8)
37 Self-dressing and preparation (6)
38 Insecure knot (6)
39 Slaughter (8)

### DOWN

1 Supervise (7)
3 Once upon a time (4,3)
4 Procession (6)
5 Die (6)
6 Disappear (6)
7 Rush (5)
8 Shy (5)
13 Welsh county (5)
14 Wield (5)
15 Territory in NW Canada (5)
17 Musical staff sign (4)
18 Diminutive being of folklore (5)
19 Hidden (5)
20 Something special (5)
21 Positions (4)
26 The New World (7)
27 Aardvark (3,4)
29 Evasive (6)
30 Institution for mentally ill (6)
31 Boxes (6)
33 Contrasting (5)
34 Argument (3-2)

# BRAINTEASERS SOLUTIONS

### Ships



### Star Search

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ★ | 1 | | | |
| ★ | | 3 | 2 | | 1 |
| 3 | ★ | 2 | ★ | ★ | |
| ★ | | 2 | | 4 | ★ |
| 2 | | | | 2 | ★ |
| 1 | ★ | 1 | | | |

# SIXY SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

**1**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| 6 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| 5 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| 2 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 |

**2**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| 5 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| 3 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 4 |

**Brain Freeze**

**Did you know, that spending just a few months in Antarctica can shrink the size of your brain? Researchers believe that this is the result of environmental monotony and prolonged isolation. So if you find yourself in Antarctica, be sure to socialise as much as possible, and come up with brain-stimulating ways to keep busy** (via bestlifeonline.com)

# Laugh!

## WIN £30
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**Somebody asked me to name two** structures that hold water. I was like, damn.
*Seen on Twitter*

**I don't think nearly enough 1990s bands** are being kidnapped these days. I've taken Steps to rectify this.
*Comedian* SANJEEV KOHLI

**I've told you until I'm blue in the face,** I am not a smurf!
*Comedian* MATT LUCAS

**Apparently the Queen threw a big** party to tell Charles that he wouldn't be king. She thought it would be a great opportunity to let her heir down.
*Seen on Twitter*

**I come from a long line of polite kleptomaniacs.** I take after my dad.
*Comedian* JULIAN LEE

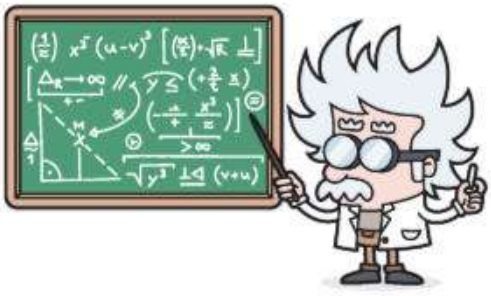
**Did you hear Midge Ure wanted to name one of his children Fail?** But he was told Fail Ure wasn't an option.
*Seen on Twitter*

**The Roman Empress hates playing** Hide and Seek because wherever she goes Julius Caesar.
*Comedian* ADELE CLIFF

**Marvin Gaye used to keep a sheep in** my vineyard. He'd herd it through the grapevine.
*Comedian* LEO KERSE

Where do mathematicians go when they die? The SYMMETRY!

*Seen online*



**I thought that the word Caesarean** began with the letter "S", but when I looked in the dictionary I found it was in the "C" section.

*Comedian* ADELE CLIFF

**Jokes about the way Yoda talks are** out of order. *Seen on Twitter*

**Who decided to call it a "boob job"** and not a "replacement bust service"? *Seen on Facebook*

**If you attempt to kill a spider but miss** do you then live in fear thinking that they're going to seek revenge, or are you normal? *Seen on Reddit*

**My dad recently dressed up as the** actor Keanu Reeves for a Halloween party and he was so thoroughly unconvincing that for a moment I really thought he was Keanu Reeves.

*Comedian* SEB FAZIO

## *Safety First*

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DEFINITELY WOULDN'T APPROVE OF THESE BIZARRE REAL PHOTOS**

via boredpanda.com

**What do you call two monkeys who share an** Amazon account?

Prime mates.

GLORIA WILDING, *Merseyside*

**When Beethoven passed away, he was buried** in a churchyard. A couple days later, a local man was walking through the cemetery and heard some strange noise coming from the area where Beethoven was buried. Terrified, he ran and got the priest to come and listen to the sound. The priest bent close to the grave and heard some faint, unrecognisable music coming from the grave.

Frightened, the priest ran and got the town magistrate. When the magistrate arrived, he bent his ear to the grave, listened for a moment, and said, "Ah, yes, that's Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, being played backwards." He listened a while longer, and said, "There's the Eighth Symphony, and it's backwards, too. Most puzzling." So the magistrate kept listening; "There's the Seventh… the Sixth… the Fifth…"

Suddenly the realisation of what was happening dawned on the magistrate; he stood up and announced to the crowd that had gathered in the cemetery, "My fellow citizens, there's nothing to worry about. It's just Beethoven decomposing."

*Submitted via email*

# Plot Twists

**Twitter users share some of their real life plot twists**

**@DudeFromBurg:** In my thirties I was talking to a girl in a bar and it was going well. As her party was leaving she said, "Are you seeing anyone?" and I excitedly replied, "No!". She said, "Because I'd really like to introduce you to my mum."

**@LukeThatHunts:** At my wedding, the minister called in sick and sent a replacement. It was my wife's first husband.

**@Kyle27LIT:** My sister left a sandwich in the fridge with her name on it. When I opened it, I saw it was just two pieces of bread and a note that said, "You suck Kyle".

**@AmySchwert:** I thought I was smart going to London to get fake ID. But I got the maths wrong. Made myself 17.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**Across:** 1 Collapse, 6 Visits, 9 Tenner, 10 Panorama, 11 Islander, 12 Speedy, 16 Echo, 18 Depot, 22 Wreck, 23 Rookery, 24 Agree, 25 Satan, 28 Asia, 32 Fourth, 35 Serpents, 36 Thankful, 37 Toilet, 38 Granny, 39 Massacre

**Down:** 2 Oversee, 3 Long ago, 4 Parade, 5 Expire, 6 Vanish, 7 Surge, 8 Timid, 13 Powys, 14 Exert, 15 Yukon, 17 Clef, 18 Dwarf, 19 Perdu, 20 Treat, 21 Loci, 26 America, 27 Ant bear, 29 Shifty, 30 Asylum, 31 Crates, 33 Other, 34 Run-in

# Beat the Cartoonist!

Think of a witty caption for this cartoon—the three best suggestions, along with the cartoonist's original, will be posted on our website in mid-November. If your entry gets the most votes, you'll win **£50**.

Submit to **captions@readersdigest.co.uk** by November 7. We'll announce the winner in our December issue.

## SEPTEMBER WINNER

Our cartoonist is thrilled this month as their caption, **"Can I just send you the link to my Instagram, Miss?"** was our runaway winner. Don't let him get too comfortable—enter next month's competition above for your chance to rob him of his Beat the Cartoonist crown.

## IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE

### Paul Nicholas

### I REMEMBER...

The British actor and singer best known for *Just Good Friends*, looks back on his life and career

### LOCKDOWN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

From "North Pole picnics" to foraging berries, meet the people who are keeping their newfound traditions

+

### ALED JONES

The Welsh singer and radio presenter reveals his favourite things about Christmas

CARTOONS BY *Royston Robertson*

Sofia Akel, founder

# A NOVEL IDEA

In July 2020 Sofia Akel, a race equity researcher, decided to launch a fundraiser to get as many books as possible by authors of colour to people that can't afford them across the UK and Ireland.

So far, over 1,700 books have been sent by the Free Books Campaign to people who can't afford them, and it has even caught the attention of the footballer Marcus Rashford who donated 400 copies of his children's book *You Are a Champion*.

Some of the beneficiaries of the campaign include children from working class backgrounds who have not been exposed to literature from Black or Brown authors at school or at home. "I've had emails from parents who weren't aware of just how many amazing authors of colour there are, and who have said how much their child lit up seeing a book that reflected them," Sofia says.

Explaining the need for the campaign, she says: "Sadly, reading has become a luxury in today's world. If you're working two jobs just to put food on the table, having that time to sit down and read can be difficult. So, there is an element of privilege when it comes to even just finding the time to read. On top of that, the typical adult hardback book might cost you upwards of £15."

This is where the campaign hopes to step in. It operates on a trust basis, whereby the campaign doesn't exist to police people's financial circumstances. "No one has to prove that they've not got money—even if some people volunteer personal information, we never ask for it. Everyone deserves to read books that they love," Sofia adds.

*www.freebookscampaign.co.uk*

**BY MARCO MARCELLINE**

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